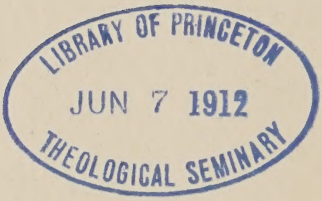

BT 304.3 .W544 1912
Willett, Herbert L. 1864-
1944.
The call of the Christ, a
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The Call of The Christ

BY

HERBERT L. WILLETT

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JUN 7 1912
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

The Call of The Christ

A Study of the Challenge of
Jesus to the Present Century

By
HERBERT L. WILLETT
Author of "The Moral Leaders of Israel," "Basic Truths of the Christian Faith," etc.

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 125 North Wabash Ave.
Toronto: 25 Richmond Street, W.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

To my Wife

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Foreword

THERE has been no moment in the history of the Christian Church in which the call of Christ to the men and women of the world has been more imperious and insistent than now. And at no time has the attentive attitude towards this call been of more vital importance to the welfare of humanity. For the success of the Church and the progress of society towards nobler ideals alike depend upon response to this summons of the Master.

But in some regards this summons in our day is of a different character from that which has been heard in any earlier period. At least it may be affirmed with emphasis that the call of the Christ to the world in our generation is very differently interpreted from the terms in which it was voiced in earlier days. Formerly it was understood largely as a summons to a form of doctrine, or compliance with certain rites, or membership in a particular organization. To-day these features of the call are quite subordinate to other considerations which have

emerged to attention with a more careful study of the character and programme of Jesus.

There still are those who believe that Jesus requires of men assent to certain facts in His life, such as the virgin birth, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies in His ministry, the performance of miracles by Him, and other important incidents of His career. These facts they regard as the basis of faith, and without their acceptance they are unwilling to admit others to their fellowship. Belief in these facts they characterize as Christian faith, the essential element in the new life of trust and service.

Others there are who put the emphasis upon certain doctrines which they derive from New Testament teachings, either those of Jesus Himself or of the apostles. Such doctrines as the inspiration of the Scriptures, the divinity of Christ, the atonement, the work of the Holy Spirit, the divine mission of the Church, and the nature of the life eternal they deem essential to the evangelical faith. Adherence to such doctrines, in their interpretation of the Gospel, is requisite to standing as a Christian.

Still others hold particular theses in regard to the ordinances and ritual of the Church.

They believe that a particular act sanctioned by early Christian teaching and example is essential to valid entrance upon the Christian life, or that a specific manner of observance is necessary to the celebration of a given act of worship. These views may vary from extreme high church convictions to broad and tolerant opinion regarding the place of rites in Christianity. Yet they are the determining elements in the confession of faith of many Christians in this generation.

And again there are those who are convinced that a particular organization is the essential form in which the Christ desired that His kingdom should manifest itself, and that outside that organization, whether the Roman, Greek, Anglican or some form of the Protestant church, it is difficult if not impossible to discover the embodiment of the ideals and activities of the kingdom of God.

All these are types of an obsolescent order of Christianity. They are survivals of an earlier and cruder conception of Jesus' purpose in the world. To be sure, they have not been without value in the progress of the Church. They have been effective in the development of Christian character in their special fields of doctrine, ritual, ordinance and organization. Perhaps it was well that

the Church should pass through such periods as laid emphasis upon these matters of lesser moment. The Church of God like all other institutions learns by experience and profits by half steps and even by mistakes. But the effort to centre in these features of the Christian society the essential elements of its power is no longer convincing. It is certain that to-day they are losing their hold upon the conscience of the Christian world as the supreme elements of the Gospel, and are giving place to more vital elements of the faith.

And at this very point the call of Christ becomes both commanding and illuminating. He summoned men to Himself, not to a belief in the facts of His career, nor in doctrines taught either by Him or His followers, nor in forms of worship however venerable, nor in ordinances however symbolic and useful, nor in organizations however inevitable and helpful they might prove. These are all subordinate to the central purpose of Jesus' summons.

He calls men to Himself, to His point of view, to His attitude towards God and man, to His interpretation of life, in accordance with which He lived and became the representative Man, the Leader and the Hope of all the ages. He calls men to Himself, to His school of life, to the acceptance of His service, which is

simple imitation and attainment of His character and His activities. He calls men to His humility, His sympathy, His friendship, His love. He calls them to His prayerfulness, to His serenity of spirit, to His fearlessness, to His divine indignation against wrong and to His convincing championship of every righteous cause.

One is not to suppose that the call of Christ excludes the acceptance of belief in the facts of His life or in the truths He taught. Rather it presupposes and emphasizes them. A knowledge of these things is essential to the approach which the answering spirit must make to His supreme command. Nor are forms of worship and ordinances of the Church to be neglected merely because they have lost somewhat their earlier importance. Nor are Christian organizations useless merely because they have become so numerous and unfortunately so competitive. These all have their place in the enterprise of realizing adequately the purposes of Jesus in the world.

But they are not the essential things. They are only means to the end of creating Christian character in the lives of those who respond to the great call. In so far as doctrine, ritual, ordinance and organization min-

ister to this end they are of value. To the extent that they obtrude themselves between the listening soul and the summoning Lord they are valueless and impertinent.

And the fact that this generation is less patient than earlier ones in the presence of these lesser things, and is eager to come straight away into the presence of Christ Himself, the supreme and satisfying Interpreter of God, is proof of the fact that the age is increasingly Christian at heart, and wishes less than any in the past to spend its time over unessential things. The call of doctrines, ordinances, ritual and organization finds men listless and indifferent. The call of the Christ reaches intellect, heart and will, and rouses the best manhood of this age to attention, interest and action. It is the call of the Christ for which all the world is waiting.

H. L. W.

Chicago, Ill.

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I

THE AUDACITY OF CHRIST

NO feature of our Lord's work is more astonishing than its boldness. His was a solitary voice, unheralded by any words save those of the rough prophet of the Jordan, who had spoken of "the coming One." This constituted the slight introduction to the world into which Jesus came. His home was in a remote part of the country, distant from the centre of intellectual and religious activity at Jerusalem, and while He had received the training of the home circle and the synagogue school at Nazareth, He was without that experience in the university at Jerusalem which would have entitled Him to the bearing of a rabbi and the reverence of His countrymen. He came as a peasant, with none of the insignia of authority; and yet He spoke with confidence of Himself, and taught with a self-assurance which must have been astonishing to a degree in the eyes of those who were accustomed to see all pretense of teaching

power buttressed by citation of authorities and exhibition of credentials.

Jesus' audience consisted actually of the few people who were gathered by His work and whose numbers increased until He was pressed on every side by eager listeners. In that following of His, however, there were represented the three great national factors of the world's life in that period, the Jew, the Greek and the Roman, and it was to these three types of mind and all that they represented that Jesus addressed Himself. Above the heads of the actual audience, made up of peasants, fishermen, tradesmen, women and children, Jesus saw the far-stretching horizon of the world, with all its social and spiritual needs, and to it He addressed Himself, though He spoke apparently only to His immediate hearers. When we consider this larger audience, the wonder grows that He should have used such authoritative tones. He might indeed have assumed to teach the simple minds of casual listeners in Judea and Galilee, but when one thinks of the waiting world to which He was apparently evermore conscious of speaking, one is amazed that He should have dared so much.

For there was the Jew, with his ancestral pride and prejudices growing out of the

splendours of the temple and the law. An illustrious line of prophets, priests and sages had prepared him to believe in the superiority of his faith to that of all others. He was essentially concerned with religion, not because that was a primitive impulse of the Semitic race, but because the circumstances of Israel's life had led to the narrowing of all activity to the religious field in times subsequent to the loss of the old and cherished political power. Since the exile the Jews had been a church rather than a nation, and a church it was which emphasized with increasing insistence the glories of the Building and the Book. The Temple and the Torah were the two foci around which the entire life of Judaism revolved, and life under the law was no barren and empty thing, but full of rich satisfactions to the pious. The orthodox Jew practiced his austerities, performed his ablutions, paid his tithes and offered his sacrifices in the spirit of a man who had found the ultimate way of holiness, and was sure that none could teach him further. He was proud of his position and of himself, and least of all was he likely to listen to a Galilean peasant, speaking with reproving tones and demanding repentance.

But the Greek also was in that audience,

and the few of his race who listened from time to time to the words of Jesus were only representatives of a large and influential circle, whose relation to the life of the times was close and commanding. The Greek was the lover of truth for its own sake. His was the life of the intellect. His was the privilege of lighting not only the fire of his own mind, but of carrying the torch which illumined the intellectual life of the world. All that pertained to human thought he regarded as his possession. Philosophy and poetry have never reached sublimer heights than in the classic age of Greece. If it be true that an earlier age had exhausted the resources of human physical development, it was equally true that the Greek touched the outermost points of intellectual expansion. For clearness of thought, keenness of perception, analytic ability and artistic skill he remains unapproached among the nations. In that pent-up Attica of his, and among those

> "sprinkled isles,
> Lily on lily that o'erlace the sea,
> And laugh their pride where the light wave
> Lisps Greece,"

he had wrought out a triumph of intellect which is to this day the wonder of the world.

Philosophy, poetry, art and architecture were his passion. His language was the crowning triumph of the art of expression. It was the language of the philosopher, the poet, the orator. If the Jew was proud of his ancestry and his religion, the Greek was proud of his eminence in the realm of thought and beauty. On the surface of things he had nothing yet to wish. All achievements were his own.

By his side stood the Roman, the most commanding figure of the three, though the latest to appear. He had little whereof to boast in those fields that made the Jew and the Greek respectively conspicuous. All that Rome possessed of philosophy, art, literature or even language, he had borrowed from abroad, because he was the world-ruler of his time. It was his to organize and command. He had laid his hands upon the dismembered fragments of the world and had wrought them into an articulate unity that is the marvel of history. His was the passion for order and law, and even war itself was subordinate in his programme to the symmetry and discipline of an ordered state. Virgil has well described the ruling purposes of the Roman race in words which he makes a prophecy to Æneas regarding his posterity:

"Others I know more tenderly may beat the breathing brass;
And better from the marble block bring living looks to pass;
Others may better plead the cause, may compass heaven's face,
And mark it out and tell the stars, their rising and their place.
But thou, O Roman, look to it, the men of earth to sway;
For this shall be thy handicraft, peace on the world to lay.
To spare the weak, to mar the proud by constant weight of war,
And mark high in the firmament the fixed home of thy star."

Thus the Roman was a world-ruler by nature. He had reached his ideal of power and success. What had the Galilean to offer him? His life was apparently complete. That which he could not devise for himself he could secure from subject nations. He need not mourn that his was not the genius of invention or intellectual creation. The world could do his work and was glad to receive in return his approval. He was proud of his place and of his history, and it was a pride not less than that which burned in the hearts of Jew and Greek.

It was to these three men as representing the organized and active world of the age that Jesus addressed Himself, and it was in

tones of complete authority and perfect quietness that He spoke when He said to them, "Come unto Me." The boldness of such an invitation becomes more astonishing as one reflects upon His representative and far-stretching audience. If it could have been maintained that the Jew or the Greek or the Roman was unsuccessful in his respective quest, there might have been ampler justification for the attitude of Jesus. Yet each had obtained his wish. He was successful in his own way. Each had attained apparently the end of his ambition.

But Jesus knew that which has become the open secret of the world, that neither the Jew, the Greek nor the Roman could be satisfied with the things achieved. Neither the formal religion of the first, the intellectual supremacy of the second, nor the political power of the third was enough to give satisfaction to a human life. It was the very fact, perhaps, that each had reached the end of his appointed course and found that he had exhausted his specialty, that made tragic that brooding sense of inadequacy which was stealing over the world. It was not that any of these peoples were fully conscious as yet of their limitations. Religious revival still made itself felt in Pharisaic circles. New in-

tellectual pursuits were constantly devised among the Greeks, and fresh opportunities of conquest presented themselves to the Roman. Nevertheless, the field was practically exhausted. Already they were rattling their staves against the sides of a universe apparently explored to its utmost limit.

In this fact lies the significance of Jesus' call to all these men. He knew the limitations of their creeds and programmes. He understood that they could not be satisfied with their schemes of perfection, and from all these fields of activity in which their life had developed He called them away, not to another scheme, but to Himself; to His full and perfect life, to His vision of truth and beauty, to His consciousness of power. And in this fact lay the justification of His seeming audacity.

Nor is that boldness less striking or less justified in our own day. The Jew, the Greek and the Roman are with us still in their modern representatives. The Jew of the first century is once more seen in the formalist, legalist and religionist of any creed or cult that rests in forms or symbols, orthodoxies and definitions, whether Buddhist, Mohammedan or Christian. From all these Jesus calls men to Himself, and the vital

power of His redemptive life. The Greek of to-day is the intellectualist, with his scheme of culture, his small philosophy, his dialectics and criticisms. From these brilliant but arid levels Jesus calls man to Himself, not to a new philosophy, but a new life. And to the present-day Roman, the man of affairs, the organizer of trade and promoter of vast industries, the artisan building his life into this majestic modern world, Jesus speaks in the same imperious tones. It is to these ruling spirits of the time, proud of their success, yet at heart conscious of their limitations and unsatisfied purposes, that He presents the sublime motive of a complete and rewarding service.

II

THE CALL OF THE CHRIST

WHEN Jesus spoke to His audience in Galilee the significant words, "Come unto Me," He did not mean to call men to several of the things which have been supposed to form the elements of that broadly extended invitation, nor did He address Himself merely to the small group of people who made up His immediate audience. Speaking to the larger circle of men and women represented by those who were His hearers, He issued a call which is at once the most imperative and stupendous demand ever uttered by any teacher. All possible constructions have been placed upon these words, but it is apparent that many of the things which have been associated with them were not in the mind of our Lord. He did not demand a fixed method of worship as the Jew would have done, nor a formulation of truth, as would the Greek, nor the construction of an organization, in which the Roman would have been interested. Far deeper and wider were His purposes.

Jesus did not call men to an order of worship which was different from that to which they had been accustomed. Liturgy, ritual, the splendid and stately service of temple and altar, were already familiar to the world, and Jesus apparently did nothing to add to this catalogue, nor indeed does He seem to have concerned Himself with such a programme. He was Himself a Jew, obedient to the law in all of its great requirements, and ignoring nothing of its ancestral sanction save those useless formulations which had grown out of the speculative efforts of scribes and Pharisees, and which laid upon the people burdens too great to be borne. From these Jesus dissented in emphatic terms, and questioned the right of any group of teachers to weight the consciences of men with obedience to such external and mechanical observances.

For Himself and His followers Jesus accepted no stereotyped plan of worship as essential. To the questioning woman at the well of Samaria He gave the outline of His idea of worship by saying that the historic distinction between Gerizim and Jerusalem as the place where men ought to worship God was immaterial; that place and time and circumstances were all non-essential,

but that the vital element in worship was the true purpose, the aspiration of the soul to companionship with God, and "the upright heart and pure." In these words, Jesus asserted the perfect equality of all places as sanctuaries: the splendid cathedral with its historic glooms and graves, the small and plain conventicle in which only the simplest service is held, the groves which were "God's first temples," where thought rises on the wings of reverent adoration, inspired by the beauty and power of nature, or the chamber in which the devout and prayerful soul shuts itself, in the wish to enter the Holy of Holies and gaze upon the ineffable splendour of God.

The thought that a formal service of this order or that is necessary was essentially Jewish, and wherever that sentiment persists, it is the survival of Judaism. The spirit of the Gospel permits the use of all forms of worship which accredit themselves to Christian experience and which are helpful and uplifting. If they meet the needs of the worshipper, they are means of grace. In so far as they are substitutes for the worshipping heart and the consecrated life, they are but "sounding brass and clanging cymbal." Jesus calls not to a particular kind of worship, but to worship itself as the communion of the

soul with God, and the preparation for the life of service.

If the Jewish spirit essentially expressed itself in certain forms of worship, not less did the Greek mind exercise itself upon formulations of truth. The representative Jew as he accepted Christianity was in danger of making it a new ritual. To the Greek it became a new philosophy. To take the splendid essence of Christianity and throw it into the speculative forms of a system of thought was, to the Greek, the highest use to be made of the new principle. But Jesus did not invite men to a new philosophy. Indeed, He gave His teachings to the world in no such ordered and numbered forms as could be fitted into a system like those which had been set forth by other teachers before His day, and have been the delight of the schools in all the years. Jesus did not ask men to accept a body of truth, nor even any single proposition. It is often said that this or that fact of our Lord's life, or some particular statement of His, is to be taken as the embodiment of Christianity. Such can never be the case, so long as one keeps the true proportion of things in mind. The difference between Jesus and other teachers lay deeper than the small distinctions which were to be

drawn between their teachings and His. Indeed, it is often affirmed that Jesus spoke nothing that was new or original. If one cared to take up the challenge, the proofs are ample that this thesis could not be maintained; yet for the sake of showing the unique supremacy of our Lord as a teacher, one might be willing to accept the consequences of this statement.

Granted then that Jesus taught nothing new, that His words were mere repetitions of those which had been uttered by Confucius, Plato, Aristotle, Hillel and Shammai; yet the wonder lies in the fact that these very words uttered by Jesus aroused men as no other words to which the world has ever listened. Other teachers had come and gone, and had left great or less influence upon the thought of their age, but Jesus, by the spirit that was in His teachings, made men "hunger and thirst after righteousness," and sent them away with a strange yearning after holiness and a mysterious reverence for Him, not as a great orator, but as one who "spake as never man spake." The call of Jesus was, therefore, not to the acceptance of a proposition, not even the proposition of His own Messiahship or divinity, much less any formal truth of His utterance. An ordered statement,

embracing all the teachings which Jesus gave to the world, would not be the object whose acceptance Jesus commanded. There is no vitalizing power in the acceptance of a proposition however true, in embracing a creed however ample, or in submission to a testimony however time-honoured and revered. It was to a more vital holding that Jesus called men.

Nor did He invite them to an institution. The Roman found his interest in framing governments, laws, institutions, as the Jew in forms of worship and the Greek in dialectic. The world was full of organizations with various objects and characteristics, but it was not to the number of these that Jesus wished to add. He took no thought during His earthly ministry to formulate a scheme of organization for any set of people who might accept His invitation and regard themselves as His followers. He appeared to give no attention to the enterprise of fashioning for Himself a church, in so far as related to an external institution with methods of procedure and rules for its regulation.

Indeed, Jesus, so far as we have any record of His teaching, never but once mentioned the Church, but continually spoke

rather of the kingdom of God, as the rule of the Father in human hearts, the new social order in which the divine ideals were to be realized. The constant emphasis of our Lord was placed upon this idea, and it was His habitual theme. It was the apostles in later times who, gathering up the results of Jesus' teaching, concerned themselves with the organization of the Church. It may be affirmed with certainty that Jesus knew that His teachings would cause men who were like-minded with Himself to associate themselves in a visible organization, and that the welfare and growth of this organization would be the chief concern of His apostolic followers in the period subsequent to His departure; yet this organization, the Church, apparently lay only in the outer circle of His thought when He gave to men His invitation to fellowship with Himself. The Church may be regarded rather as the natural consequence of His work than its object. It was a means rather than the direct end of His thought.

The Church was to become the power by whose means the kingdom should be extended. The kingdom is the totality of redeemed souls and redemptive forces in the universe; the Church is the visible instrument by which the enterprises of the kingdom are

carried forward; it is the group of men and women in whom the kingdom has already found partial realization. Jesus called men to enter the kingdom, and He knew that this would lead them to associate themselves in the Church; but there was something more vital than the thought of an organization implicit in His words of invitation.

Passing by any new scheme of religious worship into which the Jew would have been concerned to turn Christianity, leaving aside the philosophic and speculative forms into which the Greek mind strove to cast the new faith, and remembering that it was not to be merely an organization such as the Roman was so well able to construct, one asks himself, To what, then, did Jesus call men? The answer is found in His own words, "Come unto *Me*." He called men to Himself, not to a form of worship He proposed to enjoin, not to a scheme of thought which centred in Himself, nor to an institution of which He was to be the head. He knew full well that worship would take forms adapted to the Christian spirit, that the truths of which He was the centre would properly group themselves into Christian theology, and that the association of believers in Him would form the Church which should spread throughout

the world; yet these were the remoter issues of His great call. He invited men rather to Himself, to His point of view, to the acceptance of His methods of looking at life, to His attitude towards God, to His faith in men, to His horror of sin and all estrangement from God, and His love for all who bore the divine image. He invited men to come into the atmosphere of His life, to come and learn how simple and yet how glorious a thing life is, to come and learn the fine art of living.

He did not ask men to accept the Jewish scheme of legalism, nor the temple worship, nor the formalities which lay in that field of outward religion. He called men to the love of God and men, which Judaism never realized. His own deep interest in life is shown in His attitude towards Zacchæus the Publican, the Syro-Phœnician mother, the Roman centurion, and sinners of every name and degree. He wished to bring to men life, and that life in greater abundance. He did not ask men to accept the Greek ideas, nor the distinctions of the schoolmen, nor the lore of the academy; yet He gave them in Himself a truer view of life than all the porches had furnished; a view so satisfying and a life so complete that they asked for nothing more.

And He led men away from the love of mere power and mere organization, such as the Roman coveted, into a power and achievement new to the world. He laid His hand on the best possessions of Jew and Greek and Roman and said, "These are Mine, and something far better is Mine, which I will give to you; and that is Life; come unto Me, you who are restless and unsatisfied, even in the success that you have attained, and I will give you the satisfaction which you seek elsewhere in vain; not in indolence, but in service; not in negation, but in the acceptance of larger truth. That truth is Myself. Come unto Me, and find rest; come and eat that which is good, and your famished soul shall live."

This is still the call of Christ; not to a form of worship, not to a theology, nor to an institution, but to Himself. In His presence worship will become satisfying, truth will be full and rewarding, and the Church the life-giving force it was intended to be. But these derive their value only from Him, who is the giver of all life, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

III

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST

THE first impression made by the words of Jesus must have been one of surprise and incredulity that such authority as He claimed could be exercised by one who came with none of the credentials supplied by position or education. But as the audience listened, that surprise must have passed into admiration, that incredulity into conviction and yearning to know more of one who spoke with such convincing words, who revealed the possession of an authority that rested not upon external guarantees, but in Himself and in the ministry which He was undertaking.

The authority of Jesus is one of the most important factors of His ministry, and one over which there has been no little questioning. Wherein lay the imperative which men recognized in all His utterances? What authority did He have, and who gave it Him? Jesus refused to discuss this question, and when pressed for an answer, turned upon His questioners with a demand so dis-

concerting that they abandoned the inquiry. In the near circle of the disciples He spoke with more freedom upon this theme, but left it still unexplained, though fully realized in the experiences of His followers. They knew He was possessed of a power which sought them and compelled their obedience with a strange and blessed compulsion, an urgent solicitation which in better moods they felt powerless to resist. Yet it was not the outreaching of a mere arbitrary and assumed prerogative, but the recognition on their part of an imperial life and a supreme and righteous demand.

The authority of Jesus has been proclaimed in a variety of distorted and repellent forms. He has been represented as a king, whose word is law by the very fact of His kingship; to disobey whom is the highest crime, certain to be visited with merited punishment. This was a conception which impressed the Church in days when it writhed under persecution and felt its impotence to combat the vast aggregation of force represented by the Roman empire and the hostile powers of the world. In such a moment the Church cried out for a king who should vindicate his sovereignty by acts of supreme redemptive power in the physical realm. The cry of the

martyrs in all ages has been for the disclosure of kingly might in the kingdom of God, and the adjustment of human affairs to divine standards.

The apocalyptic literature of both Testaments is full of this idea, and it is not strange that in periods of persecution the Church has eagerly grasped at the thought of the kingship of Jesus in its most arbitrary and autocratic form, delighting to believe that, as the psalmists had said, the Messianic King should rule with a rod of iron and dash His enemies in pieces like a potter's vessel. From this has proceeded that type of preaching which magnifies the kingship of Jesus, and demands unquestioning obedience to Him because of His supreme rule in heaven and on earth. From this grew all of the grotesque and terrifying affirmations with which the fiercer Puritan utterances were filled, in which Jesus was represented as a king taking summary vengeance upon His enemies, and the New Testament figures of speech which lent colour to these views were pressed to their utmost limit.

Still another type of authority is claimed for our Lord by those who magnify the priestly idea, emphasizing the forms of teaching found in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

According to this view Christianity is a system of priestly intercession in which Jesus takes the part of a great mediator between God and man, and His authority is that of a *pontifex maximus*, dispensing *ex cathedra* sentences and appealing to human life through the splendid features of His majestic office.

To still others, Jesus has the authority of a prophet, the successor of the men of hairy mantles and words of fire, but greater than any of them, rebuking with sternness the sins and follies of humanity and announcing the swift doom that shall follow all unrighteousness.

Another view of authority makes it resident in the Bible as an infallible book, inspired immediately of God, and therefore containing no error, but embracing all needed truth and vindicating its right to an absolute dominance over human life. In this book the authority of Jesus is contained. It holds His credentials, it guarantees His utterances. His authority is bound up with it, and in a certain measure it takes His place as an interpreter and guide.

Once more, there is a view which makes authority resident in the Church, in its officials, its organization, its ceremonial and its utterances. The Church is understood to be the

living embodiment of the Spirit of Christ, and as such it has the right to revise former judgments, to change its ordinances and activities, and even to supersede the Bible with what is regarded as fresher and more authoritative truth.

All these views of the authority of Christ and these varying definitions of the media of that authority must be viewed in the light of His own teachings and person, and when this standpoint is taken it is seen that none of them stand the test of experience. The authority of Jesus does not lie in kingship, arbitrary, autocratic and irresponsible. His own statement concerning His kingship lies wholly within the realm of His sovereign administration of truth. "To this end was I born, and for this purpose came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth."

Herein lay His answer to Pilate's question, "Art thou then a king?" Jesus is a king absolute and final, but a king whose kingdom is not of this world and whose authority is not of the arbitrary sort which has been the bane of all human governments. He rules through the truth; that is, through the appeal which His own life and words make to the human spirit. The only authority which He ever claims is that of one who brings

to light the absolute verities of the universe and reveals the pathway of man's perfect adjustment to God. All declarations of Jesus' kingship which do not rest fundamentally upon this conception are disfiguring, grotesque and misleading, repellent rather than appealing to the human conscience. It may be possible to bring men into the Church by terror-striking portrayals of the power of our Lord and the awfulness of the punishments He will inflict; but those supposed to be converted by such appeals must be kept in a perpetual state of alarm if their conversion is permanent.

Nor is Jesus' authority that of the priest in the sacerdotal sense. The great High Priest He is indeed, carrying the sins of men up along the world's great altar stairs to God, and by the offering of Himself once for all making a way of approach to the Holiest. But His authority as a priest lies in the perfection of those ministries of grace which He has brought to humanity, and not in ecclesiastical offices whose functions He performs. Nor is He indeed a prophet of the Old Testament type, who by warnings and denunciations brought men to the sense of their duty. Far higher than this is His dominion.

The authority of Christ is paramount to that of either Bible or Church. The Bible is the product of the Spirit of Jesus working in the hearts of men. The Church is the embodiment of the forces of the kingdom resident in human life. As such Bible and Church are subordinate to the great Author and Creator of both. The Bible has supreme authority in the realm of spiritual teaching because it is our only authentic means of access to the historic Christ. But its authority is that of a means and not of an end. It is itself an inspired servant to be used for the high purposes of spiritual life. It is not a master, for there can be but one Master in the kingdom of God. So of the Church, it is a means by which Christ is accomplishing His work in the world, and all its ministries, when permeated by His Spirit, are helpful to this end. But it is not an authority save as it reflects His thought, and its very imperfections are themselves the proof that it needs constant correction under the guidance of His teaching.

The authority of Jesus consists in none of these things. And yet it is an authority perfectly recognized by those who heard Him then and those who follow Him to-day. It is the authority of the perfect life, revealing

the character of God in terms of human experience. It is the authority of teachings so admirable and convincing that men bow before them as the answer to their deepest needs. The authority of Jesus is not arbitrary, and yet it is the most imperial the world has ever known. Like the authority of the physician in whom confidence is felt and whose commands are promptly obeyed because it is believed that he knows best; like the authority of the sea-captain in the time of storm, whose commands are implicitly followed because one has confidence that in this course alone is there safety, such is the authority of Jesus, and such the reason why no soul escapes or resents this wide-reaching imperative. Jesus spoke little of His authority, simply because He displayed it, and needed not to claim it. Like a master in the laboratory, who uses with a sense of supremacy the apparatus which is only mysterious and terrifying to the novice; like a painter who has produced a masterpiece, and to whom men come with passionate eagerness to acquire something of his art, Jesus needed not to claim authority, simply because men felt it wherever He went. It was the authority of a supreme personality, the authority of divine teach-

ings, the authority of a complete ideal. In proportion as the Church loses the sense of its power it talks of its authority. In proportion as the true purpose of the Bible is missed do men make of it a text-book and a law.

In proportion as the divine character of Jesus' life is obscured, with its touching and convincing appeal to the human spirit, do men liken Him to a king, a priest or a prophet of the past. King, priest and prophet He is, but much more than these; the Son of God, the incarnation of the highest in human life, the one supreme and final appeal of God to humanity. Men may argue against His authority as they might argue against light, but when the sun rises the arguments collapse; and when Jesus appears, doubt, scepticism and reluctance melt away, and a great passion of enthusiasm and loyalty welcomes Him, because His is the authority of the complete life which finds men and leads them also into life.

IV

THE PROMISE OF CHRIST

THE words of Christ's invitation, "Come unto Me," were addressed to a world which He knew to be labouring with a certain measure of success, but which in the last issue found no true satisfaction in its endeavours. Wherever there is labour without sufficient sense of compensation in the joy the work produces, it is because the task is of less importance than the worker. The greatness of the soul is such that the enterprises it undertakes must adjust themselves to worthy ideals, or it soon becomes weary, as a child who tires of his toys. Jesus understood that men were labouring in the various realms of their activity, and with a certain consciousness of achievement, but oppressed in reflective moments with an awareness of inadequate return, of wasted time, of highest results unachieved, and of supreme efforts not demanded by the task. This failure to find rewarding satisfaction in work, this sense of a drag upon effort, this lack of adjustment

to ideals is the secret of evil in human life, for failure of adjustment is sin. It is from this sin that Jesus came to bring deliverance. His promise is rest to the soul. That rest is to be found not in ceasing to labour, but in finding a labour which brings the reward of harmony between the soul and its work. The consciousness of a labour so great that it is worthy to occupy the highest faculties of our nature is in itself a satisfaction and rest. This adjustment is the promise of Christ.

Without the leadership which He introduces into life, a man is out of harmony with himself and his environment; that is, he is out of harmony with God. In this condition he has violated one of the fixed laws of all life, and these laws are only the methods by which God is accustomed to work. The relation of the soul to its environment is analogous to the relation of the plant or animal to its surroundings. In the proper soil and with the proper nourishment the plant grows and produces its legitimate flower and fruit. In suitable temperature and with the right food the animal reaches a normal growth. But a rose out of adjustment with nature, in a soil which does not yield nourishment, or in a climate too cold, fails of this adjustment and loses its life. An

animal fitted for the temperate or torrid zone misses vital articulation with its source of life when removed to the frigid zone, and perishes. A human life unnourished by the springs of being which are in God possesses but a precarious and declining existence, for the true atmosphere of the soul is God ; "ye are complete in Him." It is this failure of adjustment, this lack of nourishment, which devitalizes human life. In God we live, normally, and move and have our being. Outside of the sphere of fellowship with Him there is no true and vigorous life possible. It is because men seek to live without Him that they limit their growth and stunt their natures. They are seeking to feed upon lower and unsatisfying things a nature which is nourished only when allowed to thrive in the atmosphere of God. It was this vital mistake which Jesus came to correct. He called men to Himself, that in the circle of His life they might breathe the atmosphere of God and grow into perfect stature and power. Failure to obtain this vital connection with God is sin.

In this very fact of separation from the source of life lies the secret of that fact of human experience which is clothed in such variety of figures in the Holy Scriptures and

which has been discussed in all theological inquiries regarding sin. Frequently in popular definition sin is made to consist in certain particular acts. Rather does it lie in the attitude of the soul towards God, in its lack of touch, in its failure to find itself nourished by the sources of being which lie in Him. It is not this or that particular act which constitutes sin in human life. The "seven deadly sins" of Dante's vision, pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony and lust, are not solitary qualities of human nature, but grow out of the soil unenriched by the sunshine of God's presence; they are fruits on the tree of self-love. Sin is not defined by any of these seven terms. These acts are but the expression of the dominant temper of the mind. It is the willingness which man displays to live apart from God which constitutes sin. It is the failure of response to the will and purpose of God.

At first sight such a definition appears to remove something of the spectacular terror which has been cast over the word "sin" in the popular theologies. And yet it is rather a change of view-point than a transformation of the essential fact. Whatever change has come over the definition of sin in recent years has served at least to remove the

ground from under two mistaken views on the subject, widely at variance with each other, but held with a certain tenacity even yet.

The first is the doctrine that the whole race is by nature depraved and rendered totally unable to apprehend the purpose of God or to coöperate in its realization. Man is born as a child of wrath, says this theory, and until supernaturally regenerated rests under the displeasure of an angry God, in whose scheme of government the eternal punishment of such a sinning life would be amply justified. Man can do nothing of himself. He is totally depraved. He thinks no good thought, and plans no righteous action until the divine energy is imparted and he rises to his new task with a power bestowed of God. He was helpless before his regeneration. His regeneration itself is of God, and therefore moral responsibility is lessened if not obliterated. The other view stands at the opposite side of the circle and possesses the elements of a cheerful optimism which, equally with the other view, disregards the facts of life. The postulate of this type of thinking is that sin is no serious fact in human life after all. It is rather a misfortune to be easily condoned. Sin is only a half step towards righteousness.

Man sins in the act of becoming good. God is too kind to condemn any one, and, for that matter, we are all of us too good to be condemned. This loose, limp and lavender conception of sin is as truly at variance with the teachings of Holy Scripture as the implacable theories of the darker Puritanism. Both views are inconsistent with the teachings of Christ and with human experience. Sin can only be understood in the light of Jesus' teachings. His vision of sin showed it to be an awful fact in the life of man, so awful indeed that He exhausted the vocabulary in the attempt to portray its blackness and its far-reaching consequences.

The figures which Jesus used to describe sin are the most lurid in the language. Its consequences He portrayed in equally graphic terms, such as "the worm that dies not," "the fire that is not quenched," "the outer darkness," "weeping and gnashing of teeth." And certainly we must concede with all men who give our Lord the slightest recognition as a teacher of truth, that He knew more of the matter than any one else who has ever spoken in the name of God. To Him sin consisted in the attitude of disinclination to accept divine companionship and guidance. The deliberate choice of the soul not to per-

mit God to have His way with it constitutes sin, and this attitude can only have such consequences as persist until the attitude itself is changed. These consequences will be eternal if the free choice of the soul does not intervene. It is not a question of specific acts to be punished by severe chastisement, but rather of eternal principles at work in the soul itself to fashion its destiny in accordance with its own free choice. The words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," are only the ratification of a determined and persistent course of action, deliberately chosen by the man himself. The words, "Depart from me," are equally the confirmation of the resolution to continue the course of self-interest, registered in the choosing will.

The promise of Christ brings the vision of the life of companionship with God made possible through regeneration. But this regeneration itself is not the mysterious thing which theology has been concerned to make it. That there are mysteries in the spiritual life no one will doubt who has the slightest acquaintance with the baffling problems connected even with physical life; and yet the great facts of religious experience lie on the page of the Holy Scriptures above the line of misinterpretation. The regenerate life is

the highest form of changed experience which human nature can enjoy. New life is mediated through new affections. The regenerated man is remade by the power of a new love working in the soul. The vision of God in Jesus Christ is the method of winning him to this new love. The Word became flesh in Christ that we might see God living in terms of our own life. That suffering and pardoning life of God expresses itself through the life and death of Jesus, and that life and death are one great redemptive fact. They cannot be separated, for each interprets the other, and both thus united constitute the vision of a life in perfect adjustment with God and full of the most rewarding experience. It was the vision of the holiness of God that smote the young Isaiah with the sense of his own sin as no rebuke could have done; it was the dawning of Jesus' glory upon the astonished Peter that brought him to his knees with an outcry of agonized self-depreciation. The vision of God always melts into the vision of sin, and the life of Christ is the vision of God. It is this life, both as an ideal and as an object of affection, that allures and charms the soul. The atonement is the adjustment of the human life to God in the act of so falling in love with Christ that the pos-

session of His life and its incarnation in our own nature become the supreme passions of the soul.

The life of service and of love is thus made the norm of our experience. And in this process the divine love manifests itself and we follow it in the person of our Lord, who draws us to Him as He promised. We love Him because He first loved us, and that love constitutes the fire that burns away the barriers that have separated us from God. The love of God thus revealed meets our answering love, and every act of obedience is an act of love. Faith is love in the act of apprehending and possessing God. Repentance is love in the act of forsaking sin and choosing righteousness. Baptism is love in the act of public consecration and obedience. The acquisition of a Christian character is love in the process of becoming like the object loved. Christian service is love in the act of carrying out the purpose which the loved one holds as the objects of his own life.

Thus regeneration is the genesis of a new life which is adjusted to God, and is the secret of peace and of power. The new life is not merely a reformation but a transformation. The soul is no longer conformed to this world, but transformed by its own renewal.

And now for the first time it is able to prove in its own experience what the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is, His divine purpose for all human life. With the regenerated life come new affections, slowly, perhaps, but surely. One wishes to be like Christ, and he comes by gradual steps to acquire the tastes and the affections that were in Him. A new standard of conduct is set up, not what the world approves, not what others approve, but what Christ approves, and it now becomes the norm of all behaviour.

The tasks which Jesus then undertook now become the rewarding tasks of our own life. Rest, peace and joy are elements which, not without patient and constant effort, and yet with certainty as experience matures, come to be the real assets of the soul. Life is in the process of adjusting itself to God. The tasks which had seemed unprofitable because they were less valuable than the soul itself are now transfigured as they become the means for the achievement of the kingdom of God. Seeking first that kingdom and the righteousness it demands, we suddenly discover that the commonplace tasks have grown satisfying and have harmonized themselves in adjustment to a new centre of

things, related to which they all have their legitimate place ; and withal a consciousness of power is growing within us because, vitally connected as we are with the source of life, that life flows through us in resistless tides, and we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. The will has thus been harmonized with the will of God. It has not lost its freedom, it has rather gained it by accepting the highest control. Liberty is not freedom from restraint, but the consciousness of working in harmony with the highest will. And thus the life of Christ has all the elements that link God and man and display each at his best. Christ is man at His most divine point ; He is God in His most human aspect.

" Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood Thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

V

THE SERVICE OF CHRIST

AT first glance the words "Take My yoke upon you," which follow the invitation of Jesus, seem less gracious than the invitation itself, for almost inevitably the yoke suggests associations of servitude which are disagreeable, and which would limit the acceptance of the invitation to a comparatively small group. No one wishes to be a servant. The social customs alike of ancient and modern times render a station of this kind undesirable in all but extraordinary circumstances. And yet no acceptance of the invitation can be considered which does not include submission to this authority, the acceptance of this yoke. One may seek in what way he pleases to modify the severity of the figure. He may turn from the contemplation of the yoke as an instrument of labour worn by beasts of burden and by slaves in carrying their loads, to the military custom of the Romans, who after victory set up spears in the form of an arch, with two uprights and the cross-bar, under which cap-

tives taken in war or inhabitants of conquered cities were compelled to pass in token of their submission to the conqueror's authority. This was termed "passing under the yoke," and implied submission to the victors. This seems a less degrading figure than the other, and yet the authority is none the less specific and exacting. In taking the yoke of Christ one accepts the results of His atonement, consents to receive His directions, and to conform to His methods of living. Nothing less than this can be contemplated. It is involved in the very nature of the new relation which the believer sustains to Christ.

And yet it is not an ungracious subjection which is thus imposed, but rather is the yoke the symbol of an authority so rewarding and uplifting that he who was before a slave to his own standards, though apparently free, now becomes a free man by entering the service of Christ. For liberty is not gained by throwing off restraint. Men fancy themselves free because they have refused all authority over their lives, when not infrequently they are the most servile of slaves, in bondage to the worst possible masters, self and sin. But he is a free man who submits to the highest master and finds in his service self-realization and joy. A bar of

iron lying useless in the foundry yard might seem to a careless beholder to be free. To be sure it has no obligations. It is performing no work, it is adjusted to no purpose. And yet it is not free, because it has not attained the place for which it was intended and is simply a useless bit of refuse. But if it be grappled and fashioned into the shaft of a great ocean greyhound, or into the driving-rod of some Corliss engine, it attains its right, it enters its true sphere, it finds its real freedom.

A tree of the forest felled to the ground and lying half-covered with leaves might seem at first glance to be free. It is utterly irresponsible, it has no function to fulfill, and no man demands of it any service. Yet it is in no sense free. It waits for the time of attaining its freedom, when the hewer shall come to shape its rough body into lines of symmetry, and the builder shall fling it across the chasm that yawns roofless at the top of some cathedral, where it can support with its giant strength the arches that rear themselves upward to the ridge. Only then has it found its true place, the liberty of a great and noble service. So of man's life. It wastes itself in the fancied freedom of unrestraint, until finding adjustment to Christ it learns its true

place, its normal passion, and its true sense of happy service. Happiness and freedom come with the acceptance of the yoke of Christ, and they come in no other way. Only when the soul is reaching upward to its highest endeavour does it feel the consciousness of rest and satisfaction in the very labour it performs. He who is the King of truth brings into our lives the sense of the mastery of truth, and freedom in the tasks which it prescribes. "Ye shall know the truth," said Jesus, "and the truth shall make you free."

The whole of Christian life consists in such enrichment of one's nature as shall permit him to render the true service for which the Master and society wait. There are various conceptions of Christianity which prevail in the Church. There is the definition which makes religion the acceptance of a form of belief; that is the dogmatic. There is that which makes it a method of worship, with definite forms and ceremonies; that is the liturgic. There is that which considers it a process of self-denial and abnegation, in which the supreme business of life is to give up whatever is most desirable, and so mortify the flesh; this is the monastic. Again Christianity is defined to be a state of soul, an

apprehension of God through love for Jesus Christ, the enjoyment of a Christian experience, a possession of God through pious reflection and meditation; this is the emotional or mystical. Still further there is the view that Christianity consists in such activity as constitutes the business of the kingdom of heaven. It is the outputting of force. It is the undertaking of affairs. It is the ceaseless accomplishment of tasks. This is the so-called practical. Thus Christianity may be defined as dogmatic, liturgical, monastic, emotional or practical, as the definition is given by different types of Christians. None of these definitions of our faith, however, expresses the whole truth, and yet all of them make approaches to it on various sides. Christian life must include every element of this list in due proportion. But none of them is competent to serve as a true definition. The real secret of the life of Christ in the soul is that impartation of vitality which constitutes a new life, a regeneration, and which enriches the nature by constant increments as the development proceeds. Christ declared that He came to give life and to give it abundantly. No meagre, starved, emaciated, scanty life was this which He brought, but a rich, full, exhaustless fountain of vitality,

a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Therefore the teachings of Jesus regarding the obligations of His followers to take His yoke, to bear His cross and to follow Him, are only the counterparts of His insistence upon the possession of a life which is great enough and rich enough to pour itself out in inexhaustible streams upon the parched and arid soil of a social order cursed with commonplace and religionless living. The service of Christ can only be performed by one who is himself enriched by the indwelling Christ. The Master calls us to Himself and asks us to accept His yoke that we may receive His offered life, His imparted righteousness; not for ourselves, but for the sake of the world in which we live, and which, groaning and travailing in pain, waits for the revealing of the sons of God. A scanty and barren life can never enrich others. The word of Christ to us, following the imposition of His yoke, is "Be ye enriched," "Receive ye the Holy Spirit," "Accept the life eternal," which life we find to be a present and vital force within us; "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," "Follow Me into the fullness and richness of My life, and then I can send you forth as living examples of the truth,

known and read of all men." Christian service thus becomes a delight. The soul rises above the desire for rewards as inducements to fellowship with Christ. That fellowship is its own reward. To work with Christ at His chosen tasks of world-enrichment is a joy so great that no rewards, not even those of the future life, are required to complete its satisfaction. Life now searches for opportunities of service as for hidden treasures, and finds at last the secret of the Master's words, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

VI

THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST

SIGNIFICANT among the words which connected themselves with the invitation of Jesus is the expression, "Learn of Me." In this utterance Jesus is revealed as a teacher who calls men to Himself to learn the things which He is accustomed to teach, and naturally the thought of the hearer turns to this aspect of our Lord's work in the three categories of His characteristics as a teacher, the truths that He taught, and the teaching quality of His life.

It has been affirmed frequently in late years that Jesus was a teacher, with the apparent purpose of including in this statement all the qualities of His ministry, and of divesting Him of every attribute of power which does not lie in the realm of His utterances. Frequently the doctrine of the prophethood of Jesus is of precisely this character. He is exalted as a teacher for the very purpose of refusing Him the elements of Saviourhood and redemptive power which lie at the

heart of His ministry. Against this tendency no protest can be too emphatic. It would be better to decline to see any of those qualities which link Jesus with a long line of the world's greatest teachers than to permit Him to sink to the mere level of a declaimer of ethical principles and a fashioner of new maxims. We need have no hesitance in comparing Jesus with those teachers who have enriched human life. We need not fear to speak of Him in the same breath with Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Moses, Samuel and Isaiah, but it must never be implied that these names rank as equals. Jesus retains His unique superiority above them all, standing head and shoulders higher than the inspired writers of Holy Scripture, as they tower over the heads of the ethnic prophets.

Thus fortified against the danger of regarding Jesus merely in the light of a teacher of ethics, we have leisure to consider the aspects of His life as an instructor of men. And first we naturally consider the characteristics of His method of teaching. Here we are astonished to find that He seems at first to have no method at all, or rather, His teaching was so simple and direct as to apparently elude definition by its very natural-

ness. He used the simplest language. His vocabulary was that of the common people; they understood everything He said. Even children might fully comprehend most of His utterances, except as He touched upon those mysteries of the kingdom of God which have fascinated the maturest minds in all the years. Jesus spoke in figurative language, using constantly illustrations from daily life which made His words the more telling. In this He was thoroughly oriental. Abstract terms were rarely employed. Truth always has an added value through the instrument of illustration.

> "For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
> Where truth in closest words shall fail,
> When truth embodied in a tale
> Shall enter in at lowly doors."

Even the most spectacular and startling utterances of Jesus were in close keeping with the methods of the time, and were understood by the people as figures of speech, making plain the subtler truths of moral and spiritual sort.

Jesus accommodated Himself to the life of the people in His use of their modes of thought concerning nature and history. He never disturbed familiar conceptions regard-

ing the world or the Scriptures, except as these were at variance with the purposes of the kingdom of God. He described the operations of nature in terms not scientific but popular. He spoke of the Scriptures as men were accustomed to use them. Yet where popular ideas were at variance with the essentials of His teaching, He never spared the ideas of His time, nor the teaching of the schools. Sometimes He was abrupt and almost harsh in His statements, apparently choosing to startle His hearers by a sentence well-nigh shocking in its character rather than permit them to rest in ignorance or indifference. Withal, there was a sense of urgency and deep moral purpose in Him which convinced His hearers that He was moved by a passion to do the Father's will and finish His work. It was not mere curiosity that drew men to Him, but rather the consciousness that He was sent from God, and His influence upon their lives was that of a strong and urgent will creating in them a new desire to live a holy life and to realize the ends of the kingdom of God.

The second inquiry pertains to the substance of Jesus' teachings. And here a variety of topics present themselves, though upon closer inspection they are all seen to be

related to His central theme, the kingdom of God. Jesus came to reveal the Father. This was His great message, and the kingdom of God is only the form in which His teachings regarding God and His plan for human life are set. Indeed it is the business of any prophet or teacher to speak of God. This is what we always expect from Him. It is a preacher's business to reveal God to men, and if he has no vital and thrilling message on this theme he may well spare his speech on all things else. Jesus lived constantly in the atmosphere of the Father's life, and spoke out of the fullness of His own rich experience the things which humanity needs to know. This teaching He threw into the familiar form of discourses on the kingdom of God, since that was the great theme in Jewish minds in His day. The words had an inviting sound. Men were everywhere discussing the kingdom. Jesus chose the phrase because it secured attention and enabled Him to deal with the facts of His ministry under the popular title.

But His teachings included explicit and final statements on the great themes of all prophetic discourse, such as sin, the nature of man as responsible to God, the redemptive possibilities which lie in human life submitted

to the authority of God, the attainment of righteousness and holiness as qualities within the reach of all, the persistent effects of sin or of goodness in human character, and the mission of Jesus Himself as the revealer of God and the redeemer of men. These were the great themes upon which our Lord was constantly speaking. They form a body of teaching which is a source of appeal in all moments of doubt regarding the final truths of our holy faith. It is to Jesus one must go whenever questions arise as to the standard of conduct. He is the final prophet of the world. His teachings superseded those of Moses and Elijah, of Isaiah and Jeremiah, since these were only partial interpreters of God. The word of the transfiguration mountain needs constantly to be sounded in the ears of a generation apparently almost as willing to claim finality for the words of other teachers as for those of Christ, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye Him."

But the most impressive element in Jesus' power as a teacher lay in His life; for whatever Jesus did He was still teaching, and the lesson of His life itself is as important an aid to faith as any of the truths He taught. To watch Jesus and to gain a knowledge of His way of living is to enter His school in the

fullest sense and to "learn of Him." Jesus called men less to a consideration of the things He taught than to the study of His own life as normal and ideal, the possession and imitation of which are to be characteristic of His students. The quality of Jesus' life which constituted its outstanding feature was His abiding consciousness of the divine Presence, which made the life of God more real to Him than any other experience. To Him the reality of God's life was more impressive than any argument which could be framed to prove it. It was axiomatic, it was certain, it was a fact of daily experience. To live thus in the presence of God is the privilege of the pupils in the school of Christ. This sense of divine companionship revealed itself in Jesus' constant use of prayer. Prayer was to Him not simply a petition for blessing, but the enjoyment of companionship with God. Of Him it might have been said in far truer sense than of Enoch of old, "He walked with God." Prayer was the natural speech of this intimacy.

Again, our Lord loved and was saturated with the words of Holy Scripture. The Old Testament was the subject of His constant study and reflection. Its great words had fastened themselves in His mind. Its most

important portions, like Deuteronomy, Psalms and Isaiah, were known to Him from childhood, and He frequently quoted them in His conversation. He possessed the Scripture with a consciousness of its value and of its limitations. He used it as an instrument because of its appeal both to His own life and to that of His fellow men. As a product of the Spirit of God in the hearts of Jewish saints and prophets, it had the promise and potency of new forms of spiritual teaching yet to issue from that same Spirit in His work with the generation of believers in Jesus. The Old Testament was yet to be completed by the New, and Jesus was thus the centre and inspiration of the whole, Himself the possessor and Lord of both covenants. It was His to use and to reject, to approve and to condemn. That which was temporary and incomplete in the Old Testament He quietly laid aside. That which was abiding He exemplified, and impressed upon His hearers by constant reiteration.

Once more, the student in the school of Christ, studying His character, seeking its secret, observes His serenity and calmness in all situations. This was not alone a poise of temper or a mastery of Himself, though this self-possession and quietness was one of the

secrets of His extraordinary power with men. But there is a still higher serenity which finds its place in our Lord's character. It is that calmness of conscience in the face of the highest ideal, which astonishes the world. Other men, sensitive to moral excellence, have been amazed and baffled by the distance between their ideals of virtue, and the best approaches they were able to make in their own behaviour to these summits of character. Yet Jesus, who possessed the clearest vision of the perfect life which has ever been experienced among men, lived in the serene and satisfied consciousness of complete attainment. This thought is nothing less than thrilling to any sensitive and eager mind, and makes Jesus the moral miracle of the world. Then, too, His sympathy for man, His love of every class, His power of inciting men to noble purposes, His wonderful reserve force which made Him equal to every emergency, His inexhaustible resources, the wholeness and sanity of His mental and moral life, His unfailing optimism in the face of apparently appalling difficulties and the seemingly hopeless task of securing the regeneration of human nature—these things constitute some of the outstanding features of our Lord's nature. They make Him the supreme teacher

of men, and draw the world to Him for the study of His life as the norm of all human experience and the living embodiment of a divine life in terms of human nature.

When men are asking the question, as so many are doing, How can we know what Jesus would have us do? it needs to be remembered that His teachings take less the form of particular decisions upon matters of daily life than of an attitude of soul which is itself illuminating and illustrative of the will of God for our human life. Those who would know what Jesus would have them do may find an infallible answer to every question which arises in their own experience by appeal either to the things which Jesus taught or to His own attitude and bearing when confronted with the various problems of practical life. It is fortunate that He did not seek to give explicit instructions. The variety of circumstances in which men are placed would have made such a task impossible. He gave rather an illustration of how a life in perfect harmony with God adjusts itself to every human experience.

The man who wished Him to secure for him the right division of his inheritance, which was being withheld by an ungracious brother, failed in his purpose, but received instead the

priceless counsels of the Master regarding the danger of covetousness. To the inquiring woman at the Samaritan well Jesus gave no satisfying answer regarding the relative sanctity of Jerusalem and Gerizim, but He pointed out the elements of true and acceptable worship above the sky-line of place and time and form.

No one who studies attentively the life of Christ need be long in doubt as to what ought to be done in specific circumstances. Each one must come to his own free choice. Two men in a given situation might decide to go in opposite directions, where it would be impossible to tell in which path lay absolute truth. Where the pathway is obscure one must follow his own deliberate and prayerful convictions as to what Jesus would have him do. Two men might raise the question as to their duty in a time of national commotion, such as the breaking out of war. One man decides that if he does as Jesus would have him do he must give his life to the defense of his country, and so he enlists. The other decides that the spirit of Jesus is opposed to war and that no cause can justify his taking up arms. He therefore declines to enlist. For either to do as the other does would be wrong, since each by

deliberate attempt to submit to the will of Christ has reached his own conclusion. Yet such instances of opposite tendency are rare, and as the spirit of our Lord becomes more prevalent they will grow rarer still, until with the truly enlightened body of believers trained in the school of Christ, public service and private conduct alike will be regulated by obedience to the mind which was in Him and is also in those who submit themselves to His spirit and "learn of Him."

VII

THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

IT has been said, and needs repeating, that the call of the Master is not to the acceptance of a creed, obedience to an outward form of service, or identification with an external organization. It is a call to Himself. He is greater than creed or ordinance or Church. If the call of Christ were merely to these it would be far less compelling and alluring than it is. This is the reason why its true significance is likely to be lost by three sorts of people. One is the dogmatist, who reduces religion to a formula. The correct definition of truth is of first importance to him. His articles of belief are logically impregnable. He is prepared to define and defend the faith with precision and courage. Yet his may be but an intellectual and arid life, in which light indeed is present, but is only half developed, because it has never wedded with love, and is forever deprived of that paternity which begets the gentle graces of the Christian character.

The second is the formalist, who defines religion as compliance with a form of worship or obedience to a commandment. This form may be an order of service, or a method of work, or an ordinance of the Church. It matters little in which field it lies. If the chief emphasis is placed here, then life exhausts itself in one limited channel and fails to find its true enrichment. Let it be freely granted that the order of service is beautiful and has proved its value through generations of worshipping and rejoicing saints; that the method of work has produced the happiest results, or that the ordinance is of divine origin and finds explicit sanction in the Word of God, yet the issue is the same. The man who gives his supreme thought to the advocacy of the form, whatever it may be and however approved of the Bible, is essentially a formalist as certainly as the one who devotes himself chiefly to the defense of a doctrine is a dogmatist.

The third is the builder of an organization, the promoter of a plan of getting people into a visible body with a definite and fixed method of procedure. The man with this passion is a mechanic, even though the mechanism he is constructing should bear the name of church. Whenever the creed,

the form or the organization becomes in the thought of its advocates an end instead of a means to the greater end of Christian life, it is but the apparatus of a dogmatic, formal or mechanical religion. It was not to such things that Jesus called men, but to Himself, the Creed of creeds, the divine Substance of which all forms are shadows, the ever-living Head of the Church.

Every Christian will have a creed. It may have many articles or only one. It may be held as a test or only as a testimony. But when the creed performs its perfect function, it points always to Christ, and obscures Him never. It has value only as it links the soul with its Lord. Every Christian will have methods of worship and work. They may be simple or elaborate. In worship, public or private, the essential thing is not time, place or manner, but the spirit which impels. The words of Jesus at the Samaritan well reveal the one necessary element of worship, whether it is as simple as the Quaker service of silence, or as elaborate as the most gorgeous ceremonial of the Roman Catholic— "they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." The form is nothing in itself. It is the ladder up which the soul

climbs to God. But if it lead no whither, and be only a means of satisfying a sense of duty, or of gratifying an æsthetic taste, it is worthless and hollow, sounding brass and clanging cymbal. Similarly every Christian will desire to observe the ordinances prescribed by our Lord. These he finds very few—only two, baptism and the Holy Supper—and very simple in character, directly related to the most vital experiences of the soul, birth into the kingdom and nourishment upon the Living Bread. He will wish to give these ordinances their true place in his programme of obedience, and his only thought will be to conform as nearly as possible both in outward act and in spiritual attitude, to the will of Jesus and the customs of the apostles. When thus observed the ordinances possess their true value and become not only tokens of obedience but means of grace, the consecrating acts in which the believer meets his Lord in loving submission and fellowship and claims the full redemptive virtue of the Master's life. Yet even these deeply significant rites may be wholly devitalized by a disregard of their purpose, and an absorbed attention to their mere performance. In such an atmosphere they lose wholly their significance. For a disregard of their informing

spirit and purpose no correctness of outward procedure can atone. Both these factors must be observed in like degree, for even the form here has meaning, as an appointment and observance of our Lord. But it is Himself of which they evermore speak, as the source and sustainer of the true life of the soul.

Once more, every Christian will wish to associate himself with those of like precious faith, and thus the worshipping and working community, the Church, becomes the normal expression of the new life in the world. While it is true that Jesus but once mentioned the Church, and spoke constantly of the kingdom, yet it was of a kingdom that should become, in part at least, visible in the Church, and should, through the Church as a means, come to its full realization in the world. For this reason the apostles gave unremitting attention to the growth and culture of the Church through which the kingdom was manifesting itself, and thus the Church is today and evermore a divine organism, the visible embodiment of redemptive forces among men through the power of the indwelling Christ.

Yet it not infrequently appears that the Church itself becomes the end rather than the

instrument in the thought of some earnest and devoted people. The development of the local church becomes a passion without regard to the true service it was intended to render. It becomes a close corporation, into which there is an enthusiastic effort to bring new members, not so much because they need or will thereby become possessed of the regenerate life, or that by this means the church may render the community in which it is set the service it owes, or that it may contribute more adequately to the evangelization of the world. The problem is rather that of enabling the church to "succeed," and this success is interpreted in terms of material equipment and popularity. Such a church has never heard the call of the Christ. It has never set Him in the midst. It is saving itself and not the world, and is doing that in the most material and commercial sense.

Jesus called men to none of these things as objects and ends. Neither a belief, a ritual, an ordinance nor an organization is the essential thing, but a new life in Christ. Possessed of this life one believes in Him with an unwavering faith which scarcely knows that it has a creed; worships Him with a loving reverence which is never conscious of a formal service, runs to Him with the happy cry,

"Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" and regards the ordinances of His appointment as delightful expressions of loyalty to Him, never reckoning them as hard or unnecessary; finds in His Church the fellowship of kindred spirits and the opportunity of redemptive effort for the world, hardly aware that there is a formal organization for the very joy he feels in the fellowship of the people of God. In such an atmosphere, belief, ordinances and organization are overshadowed completely by the consciousness of the new life in Christ. They are never absent or neglected, but are like the functions of the body in normal and active health. They have no speech or language; their voice is not heard. But silently and persistently they perform their duties in the well-ordered life, and leave the believer free to render in full and happy activity his service to the world. Man does not live to breathe, nor eat, nor have red blood in full ebb and flow; these are the silent aids to a life left free for higher purposes. The soul does not exist in order to believe, or observe ordinances, or enter an institution; its end is the possession and highest use of the divine life. And these are the ceaseless helpers, the unsleeping warders, that nourish that life and

guard the fair domain where the soul keeps tryst with God.

Obedience to the command given by Jesus, "Come unto Me," signifies such an approach to Him as enables the one so coming to gain the life which is in Him. Many characteristic phrases of Jesus and the apostles give us to understand that they regarded man unregenerated as dead. This word, of course, has a figurative meaning. It was not meant that physical death had come, but rather that the life lived was of so perishable a sort as not to be considered real life from the standpoint of its best assessment. The gift of Christ is life. To live truly is to be quickened by Him. Without Him the soul is dead. Similar expressions are used frequently in our own attempt to describe the inability of particular men to appreciate the beauties of music or art. Dead to harmony, dead to the beauty of colour, dead to the glories of nature, dead to the wonders of science, are expressions which are common in describing partially educated and thus only partially awakened natures.

The fundamental attribute of God, in the Old Testament as well as in the New, is life-giving power. It is true that God is spoken of as love, but this is no more His essential being than any other characteristic of His

disposition. It is not love, nor justice, nor omnipresence, nor omniscience, which defines His being, but life. In the Old Testament He is "the living God," and by this is signified not merely the existing one, but the one having life within Himself, its primal fount and source. This was the name which He gave Himself when sending Moses as the national leader. The Jewish name for God seems to signify "the living one," the one whose life is not dependent, but original. Christ came as the disclosure of the life of God. That life was made flesh and dwelt among us. He said of Himself, "I am come that they might have life, and have it abundantly." His most intimate biographer writes, "In Him was life, and that life was the light of men," the essential quality which illuminated the sphere of human life, otherwise darkened by the gloom and shadow of a weak and partial life.

The chief purpose of Jesus was the impartation of life. How is it possible that men can secure this divine and imperishable quality which was in Him? Without it they have but the semblance and show of things.

> "Possessing Him they all possess,
> Wisdom and strength and righteousness,
> And holiness complete."

But how is this life attained? There are various ways in which this significant transformation is represented in the New Testament. The first is an agricultural figure, in which the seed is described as falling into the soil and springing forth into the new life. The good word is the implanted seed. This is the message of the Gospel; it is the story of the Christ; it is the essence of His life deposited in the soil of the human soul and left to spring up under favourable conditions into fullness of growth. Yet this is but a figure of speech, such a figure indeed as those which abound in the Holy Word, but still a figure. The reality lies yet unexpressed.

Another figure illustrative of the new relation is that of marriage. Not once or twice, but many times is the spiritual life represented as a marriage to the Lord. The Old Testament abounds with this language; in the New it also has its place. The believing and consenting soul unites itself to the divine life in a covenant of everlasting love. As the marriage forms are but the expression of the love that is pledged within the soul, so the visible acts of Christian confession and baptism are but the outward signs of an inward grace, the tokens of the new estate.

Another illustration is taken from biological

phenomena. Jesus describes the one who follows Him as being born again. He even commands this process, and though His first hearer utterly mistook His meaning, we may gather something from the figure as to the fact. It is a new life. That much is clear. It is not the old life made over. There is the impartation of a new germ of being. The figure of the child issuing into life is descriptive of the phenomena of spiritual birth. Water and the Spirit are the concomitant elements of this regeneration. The one is the inward and quickening power, the other the outward symbol. It is easy to understand that Jesus is describing to Nicodemus the wakening of faith in the soul, and the issue of that faith in obedience through the visible action of baptism. But still the words, "born again," constitute a figure, and not the description of the reality.

If we take a third form in which the process reveals itself in the New Testament, it will be that of the actual facts presented by early Christian experience; and these facts lie in four successive lines of approach to the possession of the life of Christ. The first is the holy vision, like the revealing of the divine form to Isaiah in the temple; like the appearance of the wonder-working Master to

the suddenly-aroused Peter in the boat. The vision of Christ is the first step towards the regenerate life. To behold Him in the beauty of His character, in the revealing and persuading love which He exhibits, in the attitude of a fair and yet attainable ideal—this is the vision which allures and charms the beholder until he longs for its possession. Then comes the second step, when the vision of beauty has melted into the vision of love. It is no longer a distant admiration, but the quickening of warm and vital currents within the soul. The life of Christ must ever produce in human hearts a responding love where it is given place. Next the charm of love grows into the passion for possession. One cannot be satisfied to behold the object of affection unpossessed. All the energies are aroused to this one divine pursuit. To know Christ is to be filled with an enthusiasm to become like Him, which is the supreme quest. It is at this point that the inward impulse takes outward form, and the soul seeks through obedience that union with Christ which has allured it from the far country of sin. The faith and love within flow out in obedient conformity to the commands of the Lord.

Confession becomes a joy; baptism a satisfying expression of the new life already

stirring. The birth pangs of the soul are the means by which it comes to self-realization. The new life thus begun grows to full proportions in the gradual attainment of the divine nature. At last the consummation is reached when the divine and consenting life comes into the possession of the yearning heart. There is no reluctance to be encountered, but only an answering and exceeding eagerness. Christ waits to be possessed by all who desire Him. Then the question alone remains of the capacity for embodiment of His life in one's own. And the answer to this question can only come by Christian experience. This process of vision, love, possession and likeness goes on continuously through the years, though its beginnings may be the work of a moment.

> "Let no man think that sudden in a minute
> All is accomplished and the work is done;—
> Though with thine earliest dawn thou
> shouldst begin it
> Scarce were it ended in thy setting sun."

In these regards the great affections of human life form a striking analogy to the transforming love of Christ. When the ideal of a prized and admired nature is set before a man he is charmed by its beauty, but does not love at first. This ideal may be the life of

sweetheart or of friend. Then, little by little, love takes up the harp of life and possession becomes the passion of the soul. When this at last is attained, a true love consummates itself in likeness, and two minds with a single thought are the result of this divine possession. It is not strange that we speak of a man so changed by love as "a new man." He has been regenerated by the power of a divine passion.

If, now, the object of this love be the divinest which human life can know, its power to transform will be vastly augmented and the result will be a nature like to that which is in Christ. Of such a life there is no doubt. It manifests itself in every act. It is not by means of tests of worship, creed or organization that it declares itself. These are all helpful agencies as they yield benefit to the new life. This life naturally issues in exercises of obedience and service which are the commands and ideals of our Lord. But the real thing is the life within. Without this all else would be superficial and transient.

But the most significant fact regarding the regenerate life is its eternity. Its quality is inextinguishable. Eternal life, as Jesus defines it, consists in knowing God and the

Son. To be in the circle of that living friendship in which Jesus lived is to possess a quality of life on which the touch of death can never fall. To such a life time and space are negligible elements. Mere duration of existence is no adequate description of the life which Jesus called eternal. It is the life of God within the soul. It is a present possession, not merely a future hope. It is not a life which waits to begin elsewhere and after while; it is already growing within the soul, and expecting larger opportunities for companionship with the object of its love in years without end.

VIII

LOVE THE LAW OF CHRIST

THE necessary sequence of the approach to Jesus in full-hearted acceptance of His invitation, "Come unto Me," must be the acquisition of His mind and character. When once the soul has come into unity with Him by love and obedience nothing less than the quality which was dominant in Him can satisfy. To possess that nature and disposition which were His will be the controlling passion of the soul.

In looking at the Christ of the New Testament and of history we are instantly aware that the supreme expression of His life was love, and that thus He became in a true sense the revelation of the life of God. He said, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," which did not signify His demand that men should recognize His mediatorship, but rather emphasized the impossibility of knowing the Father or of drawing near to Him save in Christ. And when once this

discovery of the divine character is made and it is seen that the most important element in God's life is love, both nature and revelation seem to unite in proclaiming the fact.

It is true that we may read the Old Testament as we may read the book of nature without discovering this quality, but as soon as the life of Christ has given us the key it is no longer possible to avoid the significance of the disclosure which He makes. The whole prophetic history of Israel is a continuous unfolding of the nature of God as loving and as seeking the response of love on the part of His people. Forgiveness is the constantly recurring theme of the earlier Scriptures, in which the love of God expresses itself at its best, not only in the passion of pardon but in the stern warnings against the dangers of sin.

And when one goes outside this ampler revelation of God in the Bible and looks at nature in her varied forms he discovers that she also has been insistent upon the proclamation of the law of love. Our science has misread her character when it has insisted that her only interests lay in the realm of force, hate, revenge and strife, in a hard and repelling principle of the survival of the fit-

test and the crushing of the weak and helpless. We are learning with satisfaction in these days, from prophets of science no less severe in their methods but perhaps ampler in their horizon, that the law of love is the law of nature as well as of the Bible. The struggle for others is witnessed in the entire series of animal organisms; the mother love of offspring and sacrifice in its behalf; the law of affection in a group of animals which dictates the protection of their weaker members against assault and destruction. Indeed when Paul speaks of the law of Christ as embodied in the injunction, "Bear ye one another's burdens," he is speaking of a law not belonging alone to a single teacher and his rules of conduct, but rather so characteristic of the universe as to make that teacher who first gave the law expression the world's greatest prophet. We are yet to learn that the only successful life is that based upon the law of love, which is also the law of the universe. Unjust rivalries and competitions must disappear and those who advocate and practice them are destined to be overthrown in the development of the race, because they are unscientific and self-destructive. Thus the high sanctions of the law of God unite with economic conditions to emphasize this

principle which found its fullest expression in the heart and teachings of Jesus.

Yet the love which Christ displayed was not a mild and amiable toleration, nor a small philanthropy manifested towards a few unfortunate folk. It was a passion of affection which issued perpetually in a service so large and inspiring that it meant nothing less than the redemption of those on whom its benediction fell. Jesus loved the disciples whom He chose, and the greatest agonies of His life were caused by the defections of these men from the spirit and purpose of His ministry. We are told that as He looked upon the rich young man whom He bade give up all his possessions, Jesus loved him, and this love was the kindling of the Master's regard towards one in whom He saw great possibilities of good. The charm of His nature won the Samaritans who came at the call of the woman Jesus had met at the well. Zacchæus, in the presence of that winning and compelling affection, melted from his habitual mood of harsh and stubborn unrepentance into a flood of eager zeal to do the Master's will. The multitude in the desert experienced this same love as Jesus ministered to them from the fullness of His life, and those who saw Him weep over Jerusalem

with cries that seemed to rend His heart knew that His love was a great reality.

Such a nature as His, with its ruling motive, could not fail to influence those men whom He called to be His followers and representatives. They became insensibly pervaded by His spirit and their lives were transformed by His example and His indwelling mind. James, the writer of the epistle, whom tradition marked out as His own brother, who appears in early Christian history to have been a man unsentimental to a degree and possessed of that stern righteousness which made so large a part of the Phariseeism of the times, pours out his soul in the epistle which bears his name in words which at times reveal a deep and growing passion of divine tenderness and love. Peter, whose practical nature took long to experience its complete transformation, nevertheless speaks in his later years in words eloquent and reverent of that sympathy, humility and love which had characterized the Lord, and which had already passed in transforming streams into his own life. Paul the practical Jew, full of ambition and self-importance, priding himself on his ancestry and the correctness of his legal conduct, comes at last to forget all these lower and

less essential elements of righteousness and to glory in his kinship with Christ, which was his chief possession and joy. To him we owe the finest utterance of all the New Testament, his marvellous Psalm of Love, which is not only the revelation of the heart of Christ, but the coronation of Paul's own transfigured character. And one hardly need mention John, who, from the fiery and ambitious Galilean partisan, the Son of Thunder, the man of ambition and at times of intolerance and anger, came to be the apostle of love, and to speak in words of imperishable beauty the final message of the New Testament. It is not strange that early Christianity struck this note of love with a firm and vigorous touch; and that through its influence there came into this world of hate and striving ambitions the gospel of humility, love and good will.

IX

THE FAITH OF CHRIST

CHRISTIANITY is distinguished by inner rather than external qualities. It is not by conformity to the world either through imitation or avoidance that the Christian comes into fullest accord with his Master, but rather by partaking of those qualities which were revealed in Christ, and which have become the norm of all fairly proportioned natures. The Christian is known by his temper and spirit quite as much as by any actions which he may perform, and this temper and spirit must be of like nature with that of our Lord.

Of the qualities which were outstanding in the life of Jesus perhaps one of the most striking is faith. In this regard Jesus meets the highest ideals of Old Testament teaching, for, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews affirms, it was the distinguishing quality of the Jewish people as the chosen of God that they were able to produce so many characters marked in high degree by the

quality of faith. The long roll of heroes which he recalls in the eleventh chapter of his epistle is luminous with this quality of trust in God. Men whose lives were marked by many elements of waywardness and limitation were yet great because the dominant quality of their natures was an unfaltering trust in God. In Jesus this quality appears and is lifted to its highest power, so that "the faith of Jesus," as the New Testament uses the expression, refers not merely to that quality in His followers which centres life in Him and regards Him as its pattern and inspiration, but as well that characteristic of His own life by which it drew its power from God and thus became the living example of faith.

If one were to inquire what faith is it would be necessary perhaps to approach the subject from the negative side and clear the deck before attempting a definition. Faith is not merely assent to truth. Intellectual conviction cannot describe the territory wherein lies the Biblical doctrine of faith. Faith is not belief of doctrine, nor is it even the belief of the truth in the most fully rounded form which that truth may assume. No such definition can ever explain the characters of Abraham, Moses, Peter and Paul. Nor is

faith, as has been affirmed, the peculiar fervour of assent by which the soul is fused with the glow of conviction and passes into the state of salvation. There have been frequent efforts to define what is called "saving faith" in terms of this character, and yet no Biblical teaching lights the inquirer into this region.

What then is faith? It may be asserted definitely that in the simplest aspect of the term as employed in the New Testament it is a capacity for trust or confidence. "As God hath dealt to every man a measure of faith" implies not that Christian faith is bestowed as a gift to men, but rather that the capacity for belief is an inherent element in every human life. This capacity is capable of employment or may be left unused. The obligation to cultivate this quality is one of the paramount imperatives of the Gospel. What Prof. James called the "will to believe" is an obligation of palmary importance in any life.

But again, faith in the Biblical sense of the word is such a confidence in God and in His plan for human life as leads to obedience and transformation of character. Abraham leaned upon God, Moses trusted Him, David believed Him to be true to His promises, Isaiah proclaimed Him as faithful to His

people. To lean upon God, to rest upon His love, to believe His promises and so to acquire His nature are expressions of the quality which the Bible calls faith. This faith comes to embrace the facts which are instruments of divine revelation, but it is not the belief of these facts as an end in itself, but rather as a means to the acquirement of confidence in God, that characterizes Christian faith. Still another content is given to the word in the later portions of the New Testament, where it has already become the collective name for the body of truth known to be essential in the Christian life. In this aspect of the word it is no longer a quality of the nature, but rather a complex of facts and forces of the spiritual life conceived as external to the soul, capable of apprehension, explanation and defense. "The faith" comes to mean quite frequently the same thing as the Gospel.

The call of Jesus whereby He invites men to Himself was a call to the acquisition of those qualities which were regnant in Himself. In this respect the faith of Jesus becomes the model and ideal of His followers. He is not only the object of faith, but He is its exemplar. In regarding Him as its object His divine character is emphasized. In see-

ing Him as the model and example of faith, His humanity becomes real and instructive to His followers. The whole public ministry of Jesus was an exhibition of faith such as the world has never elsewhere seen. In the temptation Jesus deliberately chose the higher of the two possible courses, with the assurance that though it was the only means of reaching His ideal, yet it was quite likely to prove a failure in the end, through human disinclination to accept it. No characterization of the temptation of Jesus can be adequate which does not include His recognition of the possibility of the utter unsuccess of His redemptive work ; and yet faith in God and in the ideal of righteousness led Him to accept uncompromisingly the harder course and to reject all the offers of a half reform.

In the choice of the apostles the same quality appears. He knew their limitations, He foresaw their mistakes, He read in them the possibility of failure, and yet He chose them because of valuable qualities which they possessed, and He was willing to trust them to the end. It was His faith in Zacchæus which wrought the publican's redemption. When public scorn and national hatred had hardened him into a defiant and covetous soul, the sympathetic appreciation

of his better qualities shown by Jesus broke up the fountains of the great deep within him and caused his life to pour forth in streams of loving service. This quality of faith shines fair and beautiful throughout the ministry of Jesus. It was no small and optimistic disregard of facts, but a serene trust in God and in the moral order, which is God's way of working. And these characteristics are the secret of success in the life of every man who becomes a conspicuous servant of God. Not only among the heroes of faith as the Bible names them is this quality to be found, but in those human lives which have wrought most competently in the world's uplifting. Alfred, Columbus, Cromwell, Washington and Lincoln were all men of faith, and through that quality which is the foundation of character in any life they overcame the world.

The study of faith as revealed in the life of Jesus becomes fascinating as one considers how controlling a factor it was in His character, and at what a high value He estimated its presence in others. When the sick woman pressed through the crowd to touch His garments, He was instantly struck with this signal evidence of confidence on her part, and called forth from her a confession of her

faith which seemed to fill His heart with satisfaction. When the centurion came asking that his servant might be healed and declaring his unhesitating confidence that Jesus could accomplish this result by a word, the Master turned in delighted astonishment to His followers, as if He would say, "Did you hear what this Gentile has said? He actually believes in Me. Such faith I have not found in all Israel."

When Simon Peter, speaking not only of his own faith but that of the entire twelve, the faith that had come gradually through the enlarging comprehension of the significance of Jesus' life, said in response to the Lord's question regarding their thought of Him, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God," Jesus in utter joy at finding Himself understood at last exclaimed, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of John." There is something almost pathetic in this outcry of a nature seeking faith in other men, and finding it so rarely; and it is this earnest desire in contrast with the almost total disinclination to accept Him and confide in Him which gives point to our Lord's question, "When the Son of Man shall come shall He find faith in the earth?"

And yet faith is the saving characteristic

of human life. No man ever becomes truly great who is not a man of faith. It is this which gives victory over the world. The men who believe are the men who do things. Such is the truth taught by early Christian history. The believers in Jesus were great in life and work because they went forward in their appointed course with an unwavering faith in Him they loved. Reformers of the Church have been in this glorious company. The note of pessimism is never sounded in the life of a man who brings things to pass. Even those who face the most gigantic obstacles are the ones who not infrequently have the most cheering confidence in the outcome. Were it not so, the social reforms of our day would utterly fail. It is a thrilling fact that those who know most of the suffering and the sins of human life are still the most confident

> ". . . that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill."

In the business world the fact is the same. The difficulty of securing practical adherence to the ethics of Jesus does not dampen the ardour of those who believe that such conduct as He would approve can be permanently successful. Gradually this faith has over-

come a world of fraud and violence. Not different is the faith which overcomes in the individual experience. The man who believes that his character can be purified, his temper softened and his evil tendencies eradicated by the grace of God is the man who conquers himself and becomes greater than he who takes a city.

The power of faith was never more sublimely illustrated than in that life which Walter Scott wrested from obscurity and made immortal in his "Heart of Midlothian." Jeanie Deans, a simple highland maiden, with sublime faith in her sister's innocence and the possibility of moving even those in highest station to an interest in the unfortunate prisoner, set out upon a journey full of hardships and peril. The sublime confidence with which she persevered in her enterprise brought its reward, and such reward has been won a thousand times by those who have dared all things, believed all things, hoped all things, endured all things. It seems possible for God to accomplish even impossibilities through a believer. Such a life becomes an instrument of almost miraculous value, like the rod of Aaron, the staff of Moses, or the goad of Shamgar.

Faith is the victory that overcomes the

world. The man who has such faith is already counted as a victor in the sight of God. Of such faith Jesus is both the object and the example, and by virtue of that fact His place is ever at the head of that illustrious list which the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews reviews with satisfaction as the heroes of faith. In that eleventh chapter, which is a veritable Westminster Abbey wherein sleep the sainted heroes of many generations, are registered the souls of those who endured as seeing Him who is invisible, who heard the ceaseless call of the eternal world and wrought deeds impossible to men of lesser faith. It is in such an atmosphere that great spirits abide. Here knights gird themselves for heroic enterprises, here kings come to be crowned, and here conquerors receive the reward of their labours. Amid such glories there rises fittingly that immortal hymn which registers the spiritual experience of all generations of believers, "My faith looks up to Thee."

X

THE HUMILITY OF CHRIST

PERHAPS no utterance of our Lord's is more disquieting to this aggressive and ambitious age than the words, "I am meek and lowly in heart," coupled with His invitation to come and share His point of view and His way of living. The Roman Church has made much of the virtues of obedience, humility and poverty, but for the most part Protestantism has been trying to forget them, and with great success. Yet it is quite apparent that our Lord regarded the quality of humility as essential to discipleship. He declared that they who came to Him must become as little children if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. This allows no escape from the necessity of acquiring such a disposition.

The best illustration of the beauty and value of humility is to be found in our Lord's life. His methods and disposition are alike characterized by this grace. His meekness was not a virtue assumed. One might be tempted to say that a life so full of power as

that of Christ could well afford to be humble, because the mere exercise of power no longer afforded satisfaction. It is often remarked that men who have great wealth live lives of strict and even meagre abstinence; that those who possess high rank mingle familiarly with common people and enjoy their simpler bearing. But no such thought could arise regarding Jesus. His was the humility which resulted from deliberate choice, as the quality best suited to His purpose.

Nor was it on the other hand that weariness of power which sometimes creeps upon strong men and causes them to abandon all the pomps and shows of life. Such was the case with Charles the Fifth of Spain and Germany, who retired from the greatest empire of the age, and hid in the little monastery of San Juste to pass his days in silence and prayer. A holy man in a desert retreat was accosted by one of his younger brethren, who revealed to him his plan of visiting Rome to see the splendours of the court and to know something of the great world. When asked if he would not like to make the same journey the old man replied, "I am Arcadius the Emperor, and it is to escape the glitter of the court that I came to this desert home." Certainly no such weariness

of life actuated our Lord. His was not a diplomatic nor a wearied humility, but the deliberate choice of a noble purpose, which sought the richest personal experience that it might be most helpful to others. Jesus' point of view was amply revealed when He said, "I seek not My own glory," and "I seek not My own will;" or when He put away the crown from Him, or when He reviled not though insulted and cursed, or when, at last, He accepted defeat rather than mar His ideal. He deliberately chose a humble attitude throughout His life, and this because, first, it was consistent with His plan; second, because its result was to produce an artistic and finished life, and third, because it was in reality the means of fullest success. It is not strange that the Apostle Paul, when wishing to appeal to his brethren by that which was most unique and compelling in the character of Christ, exclaims, "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ."

Yet this mildness is not inconsistent with great strength of character. Nothing could be further from the truth than the supposition that our Lord's nature was merely gentle and affectionate. The manliness of Christ is one of the qualities to which full justice has not even yet been done. His was no soft and

yielding nature. Surely the Syro-Phœnician mother had no cause so to estimate our Lord, when He persistently refused the boon she craved until even the rougher-hearted disciples begged Him to stop her heart-breaking cries by sending her away. Not so thought Peter of his Lord when the divine rebuke crushed within him the selfish motives that had encouraged him to deny the approaching shame. Not so thought the scribes and Pharisees when Jesus hurled against them that eight-fold denunciation which blistered and stung as it fell. The calmness and serenity of Jesus in the face of disaster and death show that His was no mild and weak spirit which bent like a reed shaken by the wind. His sternness and severity when such qualities were required were not wanting. But back of all lay this fair quality of humbleness, which makes beautiful and effective His whole life.

With the humility of Jesus shines out gloriously from His life this no less conspicuous fact that those who were of His company were transformed from ambitious, headstrong men into His likeness. No nature was perhaps more wayward than that of Peter, whose conduct must have been often a trial to the Lord. Yet it is he who, speak-

ing out of the fullness of his rich experience, as his thought runs back along the years to the scene of Jesus' gracious act of service to the twelve in washing their feet, writes, "Gird on humility, tying it on with knots." The strong yet gentle nature of Paul developed from an arrogant Pharisee, a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," until he could speak of "serving with all humility" as though it were the joy of his own experience, and could beseech his brethren, as one who has already conquered himself, that they "look not every one upon his own things, but also on the things of others." Even John, the "son of thunder," who wished to call down fire to punish the inhospitable Samaritans, who insisted that no one should even do a good work who did not follow Jesus, and who sought for himself the chief place in the kingdom, came at last, through the longest and richest of apostolic lives, to the shining table-lands of grace where as the apostle of love he could speak to the Church as to little children, commending to the brethren the possession of a life of love. The quality so glorious in Christ, so transforming in the apostles, cannot but prove rewarding and beautiful in the life of every disciple; and that it is essential to a Christian character

must be the conviction of all who concede to the New Testament the authority of the supreme text-book of the Christian faith.

In attempting to discover the nature of that meekness which was characteristic of Jesus and which proved so outstanding a feature in the lives of His early followers it is essential that one gain an adequate conception of the quality in order that he may see its beauty and power. Humility is not self-depreciation ; it is not such under-estimation of one's value as renders him useless and timid. It is rather such a recognition of others as establishes a right proportion in all estimates of character. The just appreciation of others is a quality not easily acquired, but most gracious and rewarding when once possessed. To be able to recognize the goodness that reveals itself in other men is a trait of character which already registers approach to the life of Christ. It would be a sad comment upon the world if one felt that his own moral character was superior to that of all his fellows. Rather he may well rejoice that his small stature is not the full height of all the sons of God.

The just recognition of the intellectual strength of others likewise fosters humility. One cannot afford to be conceited at a time

when scholarship has become so rich and general. He meets every day men and women whose learning far exceeds his own. It is the just recognition of these higher attainments in others that constitutes humility. The work which is being done on every side is so much more noble and valuable than that which one finds himself doing that he cannot but wonder and rejoice in the amazing results of human achievement, and consider not with depression but rather with thankfulness the privilege he has of working even as an obscure colabourer with the men who are making a new world. To rejoice in this abounding fullness of life about him and to be in no way envious of its excess over his own is not only the mark of a truly quiet spirit, but is the best means of realizing to the fullest degree the values of life. It is always a satisfaction to meet those whose lives are ordered upon the principle that time is too precious to be wasted in ill-words regarding others, and that character is too great a thing to be marred by the cultivation of an ungracious and grudging mind. There are men and women whose every word seems to be full of abounding gladness in the success of others, and who lend themselves not for a moment to detraction or

spitefulness. One thinks long and lovingly of such lives and yearns for the acquisition of a similar spirit.

Humility will issue in earnest efforts to help others, a willingness to be of use wherever occasion arises. When cultivated in children it will mature into that courtesy which is so charming a quality of a growing life, deferent to older people, thoughtful of their welfare, obedient to just authority and reverent in the presence of holy things. The man whose life is characterized by true humility will not be capable of conceit when praised. No flattery can do him injury; it passes off harmlessly, because his nature is too great to be puffed up.

But one is likely to ask, Can success be gained in this manner? Is not such humility fatal to the attainment of the prizes of life? No doubt the answer must depend somewhat upon the estimate of these prizes; and yet it is believed that the best success is not only a result of such a quality, but that it is absolutely essential to its achievement. The life of Jesus is itself the most alluring example of this fact. The rewards which He set before Himself are the prizes which in human life are most to be coveted. He wished the love of His fellow men, their obedience, their imi-

tation; and no life was ever so successful as His when judged by these standards. The only means by which He could acquire these prizes were those which lay within the domain of quiet humility. When strength and gentleness combine they make perfect character. Those qualities which Wordsworth coveted for England, "manners, virtue, freedom, power," were all supremely displayed in the life of our Lord, and they all sprang primarily from His humble consecration to His supreme task.

If one wishes to be convinced that humility is the secret of success he has only to look at its opposite, pride, and see that it is the root of all unlovely qualities and most failures. To put self first and then give God and one's fellow men a grudging second place is to prepare for defeat. It is not only true that pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall, but these qualities render impossible the enjoyment of life, even during the period of imagined success. And yet pride is so common a quality of human nature that it seizes upon every fancied advantage as its place of standing. Men are proud of their birth because they have descended from a house once illustrious in history. It is no doubt a fine advantage to

possess the blood of ten generations of stout and earnest men who have gained an honourable place in the world's life by their sterling qualities. And yet it is of far greater value to possess for oneself these qualities than to be known as one who had the fair advantage of birth but used it only as a means to pride. It is worth something to have descended from the Puritans or the Cavaliers, but it is worth much more to possess the qualities which made those men the moral princes of their day.

Or a man may pride himself upon his education, considering that he has by this means obtained a place from which most others are excluded. And yet even here his pride is near the precipice, for few men can boast of preëminence in education when all are the beneficiaries of the wonderful bestowment of knowledge which our educational system provides. But if there are great advantages enjoyed they only impose the greater responsibility as providing unique means for service to the community. The same may be said of wealth, which is a common ground for pride in shallow natures. Wealth wisely employed may become a public blessing and in such instances is never a vantage ground of small and narrow self-ex-

altation. That a man is well-born, finely educated and rich, even that he is good, gives him no reason for pride, but only the humbling sense of his responsibility as one who has freely received must therefore freely give.

Of the long train of moral diseases that follow upon pride it is impossible to speak. Intolerance flourishes upon this soil, and the petty assumption of infallibility which insists that no one else has the right view of things is characteristic of the men of pride. In a recent novel one of the lady characters is made to say, with humorous earnestness, "I have noticed with interest that no one is always right but myself." In such a soil envy and jealousy freely grow. One is not willing to believe that others possess in equal measure the qualities which he believes are his own. Out from such a nature come slander, evil reports, suspicions, insinuations. And here also is found sensitiveness. People who carry their hearts on their sleeves and are easily offended are usually those whose pride is dominant and who fancy themselves injured when no injury is intended. When this unhappy frame of mind is discovered one ought strictly to ask himself if his sense of injury does not arise from a false estimate of himself.

The evils resulting from the possession of the proud spirit are many and fatal. Such natures do not get the things they seek. They lose their chances of success because they are not willing to be useful. Many a man who wonders why he is not promoted or feels that the world has bestowed upon him scant notice and recognition has only his pride to blame, since it rendered him inefficient and useless. Such a nature has no rest. It is worn by friction and anxiety. It is suspicious of others and unsatisfied with its own possessions. More than this, its symmetry and beauty are marred, and the artistic value of life destroyed.

The world needs Christlike and humble people, with the mind that was in Christ Jesus, who sought not to be ministered unto but to minister. Wordsworth's fine lines regarding Milton are an ideal towards which every nature may well strive :

" Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart :
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea ;
Pure as the naked heaven, majestic, free ;
So didst thou travel on life's common way
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on itself did lay."

XI

THE BEAUTY OF CHRIST

THE love of beauty is implanted in every human life as one of the marks of likeness to God. As His is the archetypal life, so human lives conform to His in the measure of their growth towards the realization of the ideal. Beauty is a part of God's character. His love of beauty is stamped on the forms of creation. The mountains are a revelation of sublime and awe-inspiring grandeur; the sea with its changing and mysterious lights and shadows, the trees and flowers with their ever-varying hues, the earth spread with carpets of mottled green and yellow, the clouds floating lazily in the summer sky or driven impetuously onward by the storm, the stars in their courses revealing even to the most simple mind something of the wonder of the universe, all these are forms through which the divine sense of beauty expresses itself.

Still more fully in living creatures is this ideal realized. The strength and gracefulness of birds and beasts are only an inspiring

preparation for the more splendid beauty of man, who is designed to realize all the best qualities of the living world at their supreme point. Beyond all beauties of mountains or sea or cloud is the beauty of the human face and form as they develop into that normal perfection which speaks the realization of the Creator's purpose.

Man's love of beauty is therefore a quality which he possesses in virtue of his likeness to God. Whatever appreciation he has of the splendours of nature about him is a part of this divine heritage. One is likely to delight in nature in proportion as his soul is open to holy things. The love of the beautiful is closely akin to the love of the good. It is this quality which has wrought the marvels in the field of art. The passion to build structures which shall not only furnish shelter but as well reveal the ideals of beauty resident in the soul has given us all the stately and expressive forms of architecture. It is the spirit of aspiration and prayer which has wrought out the great cathedrals of the world, less notable as convenient places for worship than as the sculptured and builded prayers of their makers. It is a marvellous result that successive generations can work at some sublime ideal, such as that embodied

in a great cathedral, putting each its own passion and love and service into the work, carrying it forward until with its last pinnacle set it is the embodiment of many periods and of varying forms of workmanship; but more wonderful still, it is the expression of some supreme ideal of worship which was never lost.

The masterpieces of sculpture and painting that form so impressive a part of artistic achievement are attempts to realize these high ideals in the rock and upon canvas. One need not be particularly artistic in temper to be able to enjoy something of that message which every great sculptor or painter tries to give the world. It is the discovery of this element of urgency and compulsion in the work of an artist which gives to one who views the work the sense of his mastery. What we mean at last when we say that Raphael is one of the "old masters" is that his work reaches out from its centuries-old canvases and lays hold of our spirits with a power denied to lesser workmen. A Murillo by means of "The Holy Family," a Rubens, through his "Descent from the Cross," a Holman Hunt, using his "Light of the World" as an instrument, or a Burne-Jones with his "Nativity" secures our absorbed

attention and teaches us the greatest lessons of life by his appeal to the divine element of beauty within us.

The supreme expression of beauty, however, is not found in architecture nor painting nor sculpture, nor even in music or literature, but in human life. To be physically perfect would be a great triumph of nature and development. To approach moral and spiritual perfection is, however, the highest revealing of beauty. The materials with which a painter or a writer works are not sufficiently plastic or enduring to exhibit all the qualities that reside in his own soul. Human life, however, is impressionable enough to reveal every beauty that resides in the artist, and when that artist works from within and finds the full measure of response in the elements of his own personality it becomes only a question of the height of the ideal, the persistence of the purpose and the time granted to determine what the measure of approach to perfect beauty shall be. As the human voice is the most matchless instrument with which to express all the varying emotions of the soul, far surpassing in its power any instrument fashioned by the art of men, so human life itself is the most perfect canvas on which to portray the visions

of supreme beauty, for the moral life is a work of art.

It needs only the statement to have it recognized as the simple and commanding truth that Jesus Christ presents to us the highest expression of beauty within the range of the world's experience. His life is the ideal towards which men incessantly and not unsuccessfully strive. In Him were found complete all the qualities that constitute supreme excellence. In this His life is not only unique but in some regards a paradox. The qualities which were resident in Him become in our lives incapable of combination. Artists tell us that the Apollo Belvidere or the Torso of Hercules are impossible conceptions of manly strength, inasmuch as they exhibit in full exercise sets of muscles which can never be in tension simultaneously. But the character of Jesus is the notable revelation of this paradox, which is resolved into a harmony by His supreme life. In Him one finds the consciousness of kingly authority combined with a true humility which in other men would appear incompatible. In Him is seen the most delicate and tender conscience combined with the serenest sense of perfect moral attainment. Once more it is Jesus who more than any other felt the

horror of sin and the disaster wrought in human life by its presence, and yet more than any other believed in the salvability of human nature and expressed constant hope of the outcome of His own redemptive work. Such commanding and seemingly antagonistic elements could reside together only in a life which was lifted to the highest level of moral perfection, where all divergent qualities are harmonized in a unity which is itself the expression of perfect beauty.

The characteristics of Jesus' life are those which allure men to His fellowship. He was attractive to all classes save those whose sins He disclosed. Little children loved Him, and the multitudes thronged to hear His words. While it is true that the prophet had declared of the Messiah that, "when we saw Him there was no beauty that we should desire Him," yet it is easy to see that these words refer to the contrast between the Messianic expectation of the times and the reality as exhibited by our Lord. They were never true of His personal life, which was full of beauty and winsomeness. His perfect obeobedience to the divine will and to His own high ideal, the exquisite courtesy of His behaviour, His absolute strength of nature blended with a gentleness which revealed

rather than concealed the greatness of His power, His poise and calmness in the face of all crises, and the matchless love which characterized His attitude towards all men and thus became the passion of His life, all these qualities found resident in a nature mark the highest conceivable level of character.

As the life of Christ is the supreme expression of beauty in character, so the Christian life ought to become its highest manifestation in the world to-day. No beauty of architecture, sculpture, painting, music or literature can compare with the beauty displayed through an artistic life fashioned according to the high ideals of the Christian faith. When Jesus invited men to Himself He pressed upon them the acceptance of His way of living. The life that He displayed before them and constantly displays is itself the model of attainment. The imitation of Christ does not consist, even as Thomas à Kempis has shown us, in the meditation of saint or mystic, or in intellectual compliance with a creed or the ritualistic observance of a method of worship, but rather it consists in possessing the mind that was in Christ Jesus and fashioning the life in accordance with the high passions that were resident in His soul.

Thus alone can the moral life become a thing of beauty and its attainment the source of constantly increasing satisfaction. When like Jesus one loves the beautiful in the world and like Him becomes a creator of beauty wherever it can be wrought, he will feel that all loveliness short of the beauty of holiness is too small a thing to satisfy. Indeed that artistic taste displayed in appreciation of the beautiful in nature is valuable only as it refines and sensitizes the soul, preparing it thus to be unsatisfied with moral qualities less artistic than those which appeared in Christ. It would be a poor outcome of training in art that it exhausted itself upon the decoration of the home or the adornment of the person, or upon pictures and statues and gardens rich with the beauty which nature knows so well how to lavish, unless these artistic instincts issue in a passion for moral beauty as well, and find their true satisfaction in the culture of the soul. There is something radically wrong in any art that ministers alone to sense. "Art for art's sake" has no significance to a thoughtful man, any more than learning for the sake of knowledge, or travel for the sake of measuring distance. Art is only valuable for life's sake, and the moral nature is the supreme work of art.

It is a satisfaction to know that although most men can spend but little time in the acquirement of artistic skill and judgment as related to the works the greatest artists have wrought with the materials of the studio, it is possible for all to acquire something of the nature of the Supreme Artist in working out moral beauty in life. Those who could not paint a picture or carve a statue or compose a poem are still quite capable of creating, with the help of the Great Teacher, a life which is the expression of a beauty that no statue ever possessed and reveals the music that was never sung. "The light that never was on land or sea" is the dream of the artist as he strives to transfer his thoughts to the canvas. But that divine ray may rest upon the soul like the crimson splendours of the Holy Grail, and become an inspiration to all high and holy living.

Nor does the development of the moral life into a work of art lack those times of struggle and despair which are characteristic of the true artist's growth. He has his passion days when the ideals of his life seem infinitely above his reach and all his work but dust and ashes in his hands. Yet out of these hours of depression and agony there come richer times of fruitful work when the

masterpiece takes form and the passions of the artist have their fulfillment. So with the character worker. The perfect symmetry of Jesus' life was not the result of an unstruggling nature, but of one that out of rough adversity carved the angel face of beauty, and entered into the palace through the gateway of suffering. Such beauty is possible to all those who are willing to pay the price of the Great School. Here Jesus, the Supreme Teacher, instructs in the fine art of living, and brings within the range of absolute realization those fair qualities that were His own.

It is not too much to believe that one of the motives which ought to lead to better living is that of beauty. Men who have no dread of sin, because they have not seen the vision of the Infinite, yet hesitate to blot their lives with folly. It is a pathetic comment on our sense of proportion that we regard bad form as worse than bad morals; but if this lower motive may lead to a conception of the supreme beauty of the life of Christ and win us to its imitation, we shall not have looked upon His life in vain. That beauty was costly in Him and will ever be in us, but its value is beyond price. The qualities that make artistic and winning the lives

of husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, friend and friend, are truly worthy of such regard as makes them ideals to be sought after and fashioned into the fabric of character. Looking at Christ and perceiving in Him the divine beauty revealed in its perfection, it is ours to pray the prayer of him of old, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

XII

THE SERENITY OF CHRIST

THE power of a great life is revealed not in its achievements in action, but in its capacity for repose. The ability to accomplish in fair degree the purposes to which one sets himself may be taken for granted of most men. The real proof of power, however, is found in the self-mastery, poise and calmness revealed in moments of crisis, when the usual balance of judgment and evenness of temper are assailed by sudden and irritating experiences. The habitual quietness and serenity of a disposition may be the result of a secluded and sheltered life unreached by the annoyances which distract others. It is not infrequently the case that the will power exercised by one person to control his temper when beset by exasperating irritations is actually much greater than that required by another, whose surroundings are conducive to amiability. Credit should be bestowed proportioned to the effort required. But in general it may be affirmed that a

nature disciplined to self-control and able to hold itself above the level of irritation and shallow anger exhibits elements of power that command instant admiration.

In this regard Jesus stands supreme among men. His was no cloistered and protected career, but one in which the pressure of experience in its most varied and trying forms was constant. His life was lived in the world's eye. Nothing was concealed from the gaze of the crowd. And yet no defect in His perfect self-mastery was ever seen. It must be admitted that this very publicity could in a certain sense be reckoned an aid to self-control. One who lives a life constantly in the world's view learns to assume the part of a public man and to avoid those errors which would pass unnoticed in an obscure person. But Jesus' life, though open to perfect knowledge by the world, was not safeguarded by that admiration and applause which keeps many men to their best behaviour. Popular favour in His case was treacherous and shifting. Friends easily turned away. The elation of a great and generous reception of His message was swiftly followed by the sadness of desertion and opposition. Moreover a thousand daily experiences tested Him to the utmost. The foolish and im-

pertinent questions of the disciples, their evident failure to catch His meaning, their crass and materialistic views of the kingdom, their ambition for rank and elevation, the jealous suspicions and stinging sneers of the scribes and lawyers, the secret plots of the Pharisees, the wearing shallowness of the multitude—all must have tried to the limit a nature so refined and sensitive to every influence as was that of Jesus. Yet through it all He preserved the calm of perfect serenity and never permitted Himself to be jostled or disquieted by friends or enemies.

It must not be forgotten that some of the scenes in Jesus' life have been otherwise interpreted. His fierce denunciation of the Pharisees has been charged to a hot and sudden anger resulting from some unusually trying insult. The refusal at first to heal the daughter of the Syro-Phœnician woman has been explained as due to impatience at an impertinent intrusion upon His leisure. The cursing of the fig-tree has been asserted to be the ebullition of irritation when Jesus was disappointed. These explanations, however shocking to a sympathetic reader of that life, should not be brushed aside as impossible and unworthy, but carefully weighed ; for all these events are set down to inform us as to

the precise nature of the Son of Man. Our knowledge of Him can only result from a full consideration of all sides of His character. We do Him no honour in claiming more for Him than the record claims. But when all the facts are severely examined there remains no basis for such questionable explanations of our Lord's conduct. In every instance the circumstances suggest the reason for His particular attitude. The arrogant assumption of the Pharisees, the latent and hesitant faith of the Syrian mother, and the lesson of fruitfulness needed by the disciples abundantly justify—nay, indeed, they demand—just such words as those Jesus used. Far from diminishing our estimate of His calmness and poise, they increase it as showing Him furnished and ready for every emergency.

The secret of this quality was the depth and greatness of His own nature and the rigorous discipline to which He had submitted His life. He had learned to be quiet when other men would have lost their self-possession and fretted at their hardships. He drew from deep wells the living water for His own refreshment, and that which made possible His promise to impart to the thirsty and unsatisfied world the blessing which should prove an inner fountain springing up

into eternal life. He spoke of the peace He enjoyed as wonderful and untroubled. He not only possessed it Himself, but was able to impart it to others. "My peace," said He, "I give you." Not such peace as the world could give did He bestow, but a rich and abiding calmness of soul drawn from the exhaustless sources of the divine life.

Thus it is apparent that the serenity of Jesus was not the result of withdrawal from the conflict into which men are thrown, but was a masterful and fixed quality of nature against which the surges of human passion, hatred, calumny and opposition beat in vain, and which equally resisted those forces still harder to meet, the appeals of mistaken affection and of self-seeking love. He was always gentle, quiet and serene; yet men discerned that these qualities were joined to a firmness of will and a stability of resolution that showed no variableness nor shadow of turning. Serenity does not depend on the absence of disturbing and contrary experiences, but on a quality of nature which retains its self-command and abides, not unconcerned, but unreached, above the storm. Such an idea the Greeks had of divinity, and Cleon could desire for his royal friend no greater blessing than such peace:

"Wishing thee wholly where Zeus lives the most,
Within the eventual element of calm."

But such an experience was never known till Jesus came among men to show what the normal life should be. If there is, as poets have said, a place of quiet even in the heart of the whirlwind, Jesus discovered the secret and made it known to His people. For Paul had learned that great truth. He cheers his brethren with the reflection that in the very encounter of the world with its besetting evils, "the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus."

The serenity of our Lord never permitted itself to be interpreted as unconcern. His nature was ever sensitive to human need. The passion of the preacher came upon Him at the sight of men. His yearning tenderness went out after the poor and the unprovided. The sinner filled Him with inexpressible concern. Yet so great was His faith in the salvability of man, however erring he might be, that this optimism and hopefulness preserved Him from that fear which would have been well-nigh despair. It is significant that He who saw as no one had ever seen, or ever will, the awfulness of sin, was ever ready to register His faith in the possibility of re-

demption. And He wasted no time or power in mere emotion over the terrible fact of evil, but used every energy of His life in a resolute grapple with the monster, and His words of courage and hope ring out like trumpet notes to those who are struggling in the thick of the fight.

But the most marvellous phase of the serenity of Jesus is His perfect restfulness of soul in face of the most exalted ideal of conduct the race has ever beheld. Kant's great words always occur to one in thinking of this fact. The two unspeakable wonders to the philosopher were the starry heavens above and the moral law within, and of the two the second was beyond expression the greater. So supreme was this "categorical imperative," this demand of the conscience for perfection of character, that he felt himself powerless to satisfy it with any measure of fullness in the short span of the present life, and therefore rose with a certain unquenchable conviction to the certainty of an eternal life, where the opportunity to realize so sublime an ideal should be attained. But how much loftier must have been Jesus' ideal of conduct than Kant's! No conscience was ever so delicate and sensitive as His. No eye ever looked with such undazzled gaze upon the white light of

absolute perfection. And yet not for one moment does Jesus betray the consciousness of even the smallest personal divergence of conduct from that supreme and awe-inspiring ideal. That is the most tremendous thought one can apprehend regarding our Lord. Its compelling force is irresistible. It floods His person with a glory above the brightness of the sun. In the face of that demonstration one can only bow with uncovered head and repeat the words of Thomas, "My Lord and my God."

If the example of our Lord has to us the supreme value which we accord it in our statements of Christian belief, certainly the quality of serenity which was in Him must be given its true place in our own natures. When attention is given to the utterances of both Jesus and His apostles it is perceived that they insisted upon the necessity of acquiring this very virtue if the law of Christ was to have due supremacy in character. Jesus warned His disciples against anxiety. "Take no thought for the morrow," said He; and while these words can never be pressed into a doctrine of indifference regarding due and appropriate provision for the future, they must be considered as the direct and emphatic protest against all forms of anxiety that rob

human life of its power of achievement. Most of the evils which we dread are of the imagination. The mountain passes that seem so terrible before us really sink and become plains when we approach them in the spirit of faith. The lions in the pathway we discover to be chained, as did the pilgrim in Bunyan's dream, and the deep and swiftly running streams are quite fordable by the assistance of the divine Guide. Anxiety is a wasting of strength in apprehension of troubles which are quite as likely not to come. We have a way of crossing our bridges before we come to them, and thus of inviting discouragement and collapse when there is really no occasion.

The ringing word of cheer addressed to the Philippian believers is, "In nothing be anxious." Foresight and provision are necessary and admirable, but anxiety never. Even those crises in life which are most real, if met in the spirit of courage, are likely to yield themselves to solution, where anxiety would unnerve and strip one of his power. The secret of serenity which was in Christ and which in Him became the means of conquest over annoyance and irritation is the Christian's secret of a happy life. Business troubles, sickness and many other causes of

depression yield to a calm and quiet spirit that is informed with faith and resolute through love. That mind which was in Christ Jesus is the secret of serenity and power.

It must also be remembered that those annoyances which come to us from others are oftentimes the results of certain concessions which are made to anxiety and fretfulness and are thus in large measure invited. Emerson observes: "The power men possess to annoy me I give them by a weak curiosity. No man can come near me but through my act," and St. Bernard has written: "Nothing can work me damage except myself. The harm that I sustain I carry about with me, and am never the real sufferer but by my own fault."

The causes of discontent lie generally in a certain shallowness of nature and narrowness of vision by means of which one is limited to inadequate sources of enjoyment or prevented from perceiving much of the real satisfaction there is in the Christian life. No one can be a pessimist or indulge in the habit of depression without thereby ignoring the great opportunities for happiness which lie close at hand; and while happiness can never be considered the supreme end of life, yet it grows

naturally from the right use of powers and proper adjustment to the programme of Christ. He is as foolish who considers that happiness is the thing most to be desired as is he who regards suffering as a necessary state, and devotes himself through this misguided belief to austerity and self-deprivation.

> "Not enjoyment and not sorrow
> Is our destined end or way,"

but such a recognition of the divine purpose that life becomes radiant through service. Happiness which is not the result of frivolity but of a large and serene view of life is a good greatly to be desired. On the other hand, sadness which comes from sin and from the troubles that sin brings into human experience is not unexpected nor necessarily evil so long as it does not breed discontent. George Eliot says: "I hold all indulgence in sadness that has the slightest tincture of discontent as a great delinquency."

It might be thought that one of the justifications for perfect serenity on the part of Jesus was His consciousness of fulfilling completely the Father's purposes for His life, whereby there came a total absence of any element of inadequacy in His service. How is it possible for us who find every day

marked by certain delinquencies in our conduct to be ever satisfied or calm? It is true that we cannot expect that quiet which comes out of perfect attainment, yet one may accept the Saviour's plan of doing each day its appointed task as our small power gives us the ability to do, and thus fulfilling Browning's ideal expressed in "Sordello":

> "to do his best
> With means so limited, and let the rest
> Go by."

Such a contentment, which is not inconsistent with the consciousness of greater possibilities, may be enjoyed by every follower of Christ, and may thus prove the means of attaining that serenity which was also His.

XIII

THE ANGER OF CHRIST

THE universal picture of the Master as it has taken form in the mind of the Church is that of one in the act of benediction. The hand outstretched in blessing upon the needy and in bestowment of grace and love upon those in any distress is so characteristic of our conception of the Christ that it has become familiar and satisfying. The centuries have proclaimed our Lord to be the great benefactor of the race. His influence is that of a calm and loving Master who brings peace where before there was strife. The apostles so beheld Him. To Peter Jesus was the shepherd of the sheep. To Paul He was the ascended Lord who had proclaimed life and immortality to men. To John He was the revelation of the love of God. Peter spoke of that humility which characterized Him as betokened by the towel with which Jesus girded Himself to wash the feet of the disciples. Paul besought the Corinthians "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" to cultivate love for one another,

while John spoke of that grace and truth which, as contrasted with the law of Moses, came by Jesus Christ. It is not strange, therefore, that men have often thought of the Gospel as a system that tended to meekness and non-resistance, to soft and effeminate character, to mild and humble deportment, to a bending disposition and an acquiescent mood. To some Jesus has appeared too mild and tender to stand as a resolute champion of righteousness. Such interpreters hear no tones from His voice but those of entreaty and benediction.

Yet there were other phases of His nature which need to be considered in a finished estimate of His life. In Him there was a hate of hate and a scorn of scorn, as well as a love of love, and men soon learned that He had a masterful as well as a beneficent side. His love was not the manifestation of weakness nor a concession to entreaty. True love is unbending and rigorous in its demands. If any have thought of Jesus as too mild and amiable to speak in other tones than those of softness and of sympathy, they need to consider once more the life recorded in the Gospels and revise their judgments. Not so did they think of Him who gnashed their teeth under His strong denunciations of their

hypocrisy and arrogance. Not so thought the Pharisees, at whom He hurled that eightfold denunciation, which must have scorched and blistered as it fell. Not so did they regard Him who saw His knotted lash descend on the shoulders of the tradesmen in the temple courts. Not so thought the Syro-Phœnician mother as she followed with many tears the quiet and retreating figure that paid no heed to her piteous requests for help; and not so did those in the synagogue at Nazareth estimate the claimant for the Messiahship who denounced their narrowness and provincialism and proclaimed the world-wide sweep of the kingdom of God.

Nor were these expressions of the anger of Jesus hot and intemperate ebullitions of a temper that could not be controlled. They were no mere flashes of an indignation that had for the moment mastered Him. Nothing is clearer than that Jesus never for a moment lost that supreme control of Himself which is the wonder of the ages. From His youth He had learned the severe discipline of self-repression. He had studied to be quiet and learn for Himself and for the nation the will of God. "I am come," said He, "to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His

work," and no strength that was required for that great task could be wasted in mere gusts of passion. There had been long years of waiting and quiet before the call to action came. The desire to be at His Father's business was upon Him from His earliest years. His spirit must have leaped within Him more than once as He listened to the voices that called Him to His great task. He was not unaware that Rome was becoming every month more insolent and tyrannical, the publicans more fraudulent and avaricious, the Pharisees more hypocritical and godless, the people more degraded and brutal; yet He waited while other men would have felt the passion of action too great to be controlled. The patience of our Lord in the face of the circumstances of His day is marvellous, until we remember that He knew the purposes of God as no other has ever known. When, therefore, His anger leaped forth against those who were worthy of rebuke it had the greater power because it came from the quiet and discipline of a perfect life.

The strangeness of this indignation arrests at once the attention of the thoughtful because of the class against which it was directed. Jesus never seems to have de-

nounced the vicious and the outcast. The depraved and the despised were immune from His open rebuke. The publicans, perhaps the most hated class of His day, were not only passed by without censure, but were admitted to His friendship. For the woman taken in adultery He had only words of gentle admonition, "Go and sin no more," while to her accusers He spoke in wrath and scorn. To the woman of Samaria, blemished and alien as she was, He revealed the greatest secret of His life. Of the sinner who washed His feet at the feast He spoke in words of rare appreciation. To the Pharisees He announced that the publicans and harlots would enter the kingdom of heaven before them, and to the thief on the cross He extended the mercy of divine love. Such a contrast between His denunciation of the righteous and orthodox and His pity and sympathy for those who were openly despised members of the community is significant and astonishing.

Yet the reasons which underlie this attitude of Jesus are not far to seek. The great quality of His life was love. This showed itself to all who needed it. But mercy involves indignation as well as pity. No man is ever truly merciful who has not the

capacity for hot and righteous anger. But in the case of the outcasts to whom Jesus spoke His words of comfort, indignation had already had its way. They were despised and shunned by society and had largely paid the penalty of their transgressions. For these therefore He had remaining only pity and love. But for those who persisted in their self-righteousness and arrogance there was no room for pity until indignation had had its course. Jesus never could be understood as approving the immoral lives of those whom He befriended. Nor was He ever so understood. They knew, those despised and outcast ones, that He had no place in His programme for sin. It was enough if He could point them to the way of hope and teach them that self-respect which they had well-nigh lost. It was unnecessary for Him to denounce the sins which had ostracized them from society. They had already felt the lash of public scorn. Those denunciations were but the alphabet of the moral life. He chose to speak the words which should reveal the larger sanctions of conduct and drag the veil from the faces of those who were deluding themselves in self-righteousness, and were therefore in deeper condemnation.

The real objects of Jesus' indignation were

those who displayed this self-righteousness. Hypocrisy was ever hateful to His soul. He had only strong indignation against proud and selfish men. For the erring and the sinful He had pity and love. But mercy is not toleration. Mercy is angry with sin, while toleration is only unconcerned. Unless a man can be angry he cannot be merciful. Against sin indignation must first be satisfied before mercy can have its way. But those whom Jesus denounced had not yet been detected in their sin. It was not that their deeds were obnoxious to the law, but the moral sense of the age had not yet risen to the level of condemnation of hypocrisy and selfishness. Those whose sins Jesus published and rebuked were the most respectable men of the time. They included the representatives of the law, the ministry and the schools. The scribes and priests and Pharisees stood together in a proud, self-centred group whose airs and arrogance Jesus despised. He had due regard for the sanctions of the law and sympathized with all the righteous functions of the scribes, but with their spirit and temper He could have no sympathy.

Indeed the scribes had taken all the spirituality out of their work. They were narrow

and exclusive, vain and pompous. Jesus saw that these men knew better than they did, or should have known. He who made due allowance for the shortcomings of the publican and the harlot made none for these champions of the law who wasted their lives in small, inconsequential conceits and rabbinical fancies, and forgot the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy and truth. This was the spirit which had killed the prophets, and these were the sons of the murderers, both in race and nature. First, their fathers had persecuted and then killed the prophets; then they had taken the truth which was vital in the prophets' teachings and by conforming to it had made of it as dead a thing as the prophets had denounced. Such men hated above all things the fatigue of being alive. Conformity is easier than life. If the prophet were to return to earth he would find the very instruments which he had employed against the deadness and apathy of his age used in building a new prison to bind the men of a later generation. It is one of the tragedies of Christian history that prison bars for the conscience are forged out of the very weapons with which the heroes of a former time have fought for liberty. The scribes of every generation idolize the

memory of the prophets whom their hatred killed in earlier days. The party that venerates a reformer's memory is generally the one that would resist his reforms if he were alive again. The chief zeal of such men is simply a certain spite against those with whose opinions they disagree.

Against such men Jesus could feel only indignation. Better were it in His sight to commit a great sin and be sincerely repentant over it than to go on glorying in small sins by which life is enfeebled. He has forever stamped with His stern and blackening disapproval such men in His great parable of the Pharisee and the publican. Against an open violator of the law society can arm itself, but who shall avoid the pit which the Pharisee digs and covers with reeds of false pretense? The open sinners were ignorant. From them little could be expected. But the Pharisees knew the truth and yet refused by it to be made free. For such men Jesus reserved the most terrible words in His vocabulary. For them He made no excuse. They were the offspring of vipers. They were the children of hell. For them Gehenna waited with the worm that dies not and the fire that is not quenched.

Jesus could have made friends with these

conformists of His age had He been willing so to do, but He would not withhold His anger at their ungracious attitude. There was a sin, He said, which had no forgiveness, and it is clear that that sin in His thought was the sin of persistent unrepentance. Not even at the cross could Jesus pray for the forgiveness of such foes of righteousness.

The spirit of indignation manifested by Jesus at many points in His ministry when He was brought into contact with the proud and self-sufficient scribes and Pharisees is the indignation needed by Christ's followers in every age. Those who have no capacity for anger cannot be His disciples, for such an inability augurs a lack of the spirit that was in Him. And yet the anger of Jesus never excuses mere indignation against those who wrong us or treat us ill. Jesus had only words of kindness for those who were His enemies. It was against those whose life was a standing menace to righteousness and whose example blocked the progress of the kingdom of God that He spoke in words of stern and unbending disapproval. The severity of Jesus must find expression in His followers, if the kingdom of God is to come with power. It is significant that in the great platform of the Messianic age an-

nounced by the prophet and approved by our Lord, one of the items is that commanding sentence,

> "To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,
> And the day of vengeance of our God."

The anger of Jesus means that vengeance which must come upon all the works and workers of iniquity. It must signify the stern indignation of all Christians against those forces which brutalize and degrade human life. Whatever oppresses humanity and robs it of its power to realize higher ideals demands the indignation of the children of God. When corrupt politics threaten the overthrow of municipal or national righteousness, and small conformists plead their inability to promote the cause of purity, it is time that Christians should rise in the strength of their divine citizenship, with anger, not against men, but against the corrupt things that degrade men. When the saloon with all its accessories of evil flaunts its power in the face of the world and the people are complacent and the Church silent, then it is time for every stout and earnest soul to rise in indignation and protest and send back to the abyss from whence it came this destroying demon. When nations or individuals

groan under galling oppression and cry out for sympathy and help, then it is time for men to feel their anger hot within them, and demand a better order.

Such anger is not petulance. It is only the expression of a deeper and broader love, for divine love is itself angry with wickedness all the day. It is the duty of the Christian so to rule his spirit that it may not be moved by sudden gusts of anger, but may respond in indignant and effective protest against every dark and crying evil and be the helper to all who appeal to him as the champion of the oppressed. Then and then alone will the world come to know the deep significance of the great Messianic words:

> "... the acceptable year of the Lord,
> And the day of vengeance of our God."

XIV

THE FEARLESSNESS OF CHRIST

THE qualities which make the life of Jesus impressive and unique are His sinlessness, His consciousness of God and His mastery of life. Yet scarcely less significant is His fearlessness. Of the dread which regards with apprehension the phenomena of daily experience, of the everlasting fear which robs the soul of power, He was unaware. He moved with calmness and intrepidity where other men shrank with terror of lurking danger. He handled with awareness and mastery the facts of life which to His contemporaries were shrouded in mystery and fringed with fears. This superiority to alarm revealed itself in countless ways: In His frank handling of truth in spite of opposing tradition; in His disregard of disease, even though He met it in its most infectious and loathsome forms; in His unmoved calmness in the face of hostile and headlong mobs; in His unhesitating acceptance of suffering and death when they became essential to His programme.

Nor was this fearlessness the result of a nature essentially different from our own. Too often the glory of the Master's life is dimmed by definitions which rob Him of His real humanity under the guise of enhancing His divinity. The reverent and thoughtful student of the gospel narratives will resist to the last attempts to impeach or impair the reality of the human life of the Lord. In that real humanity lies its supreme significance as a disclosure of God's life in such terms as man can understand. Nor will the divine factor in that life be less impressive, rather the more, for the effort we make to realize that Jesus was "in all things made like unto His brethren."

Looking more attentively into this fact of the fearlessness of Jesus, one cannot hesitate to ask certain questions as to its origin and quality. The emphasis of the Gospels is upon the naturalness and quiet growth of the child in the Nazareth home. "He grew in wisdom, and in stature, and in favour with God and man." Physical development, intellectual interest and education, human regard and social concern, and the religious spirit, all manifested themselves in orderly and just proportion. His life was unusual but not abnormal. Few boys at the age of

twelve would have chosen the class-rooms of the temple school in preference to the bustle and excitement of the bazaars, on a visit to Jerusalem; and yet the people of Nazareth saw so little that was unique in the "carpenter's son" that His subsequent claim to authority aroused their astonishment and resentment.

Did fear, then, have its usual place in the childhood of Jesus, or was He different from the first? In an age when superstition was an unavoidable inheritance, when omens and auguries were a part of the accepted creed, when evil spirits were supposed to account for the most of the misfortunes of men, and were placated by a hundred daily arts, when to the dread of satyrs, vampires and the satan of the later Jewish theology there were added the terrors of defilement from impure and unlawful things and from the dead, it is evident fear must have played an imperious part in the life of every Jew. It is depressing to think of the burden of misery which has fallen on childhood through successive centuries by reason of bondage to fear. The terror of ghosts, darkness and savage beasts, which is the weapon of ignorant authority in subduing the will of the child, the threat of mysterious and appalling danger, so easily

invoked by vicious servants or stupid parents, leave lasting marks on child nature, and limit its powers for life.

From that tyranny of false beliefs, that incubus of dark and deadening superstitions, the little child is all too slowly being delivered in our century, and even yet much remains to be done. Did Jesus lie under the burden of these childish terrors in His earliest years? Doubtless He did. His mother and Joseph shared the views of their age. They understood life only as interpreted by their contemporaries. To minds like theirs, in that and many other generations, the unseen universe with its mysteries and monsters was as real as visible. There was nothing to shield the childhood of Jesus from this oppression of fear.

As He grew, however, the consciousness of God, so strong in the select souls of Hebrew history, must have become to Him a constant assurance of good. Long before the Messianic task took form in His mind, we may believe this sense of nearness to God possessed Him. One needs to walk here with unshod feet, for the ground is holy. But that passionate love of the Father, which everywhere voices itself in His life, was no late fruit on the tree of His character. Is it

too much to believe that this unique sense of God and the dawning realization of His perfect power to resist and overcome sin in His own nature were the paths by which He approached His first knowledge of the Messianic ministry? With His sense of the Father's nearness and love came a growing confidence. Fear was laid aside. His young manhood expanded in symmetry and beauty. The powers of His life were developed by labour and responsibility. The call of God found Him ready. Sinless, prepared, obedient, He took up His redemptive task.

The fearlessness of Jesus revealed itself in many forms. One of the common human experiences is sickness. To most men it is a reality at some time; to still more, if not to all, it is a menace. The world walks in fear of disease. Men dread it, and take refuge at its approach, real or imagined, in precautions and defenses. The list of people is incalculable who through fear of pain, illness, death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage. Thousands die needlessly from fear of disease, and other thousands go softly and apprehensiveiy, wasting time, money and vitality on the prevention of fancied ills. Was Jesus subject to human sickness? There is nothing to prove that He was not. He

was not immune from the race inheritance of pain. They go too far who argue that because He was sinless He was never ill. Not all sickness comes from the sin of the sufferer, else would children never be born blind, deformed, or leprous. One need not press the meaning of such words as, "He took our sicknesses." But we may well suppose that Jesus had some share in the world's physical ills. Yet these lessened in no degree His confidence in God. In spite of sickness He was fearless, and in that fearlessness He conquered and avoided most of the diseases of life, which spring out of fear.

Nature to Him was full of beauty and blessing. To most men it is full of danger. Its mysteries baffle and terrify. Its storms, its heights, its precipices, its poisons, its beasts, its serpents, are full of nameless terror. To Jesus these were but the manifestations of the power and purpose of God. As such they had no fearsome and forbidding aspects. In confidence He moved through nature, among men and in the midst of what we call deadly things as if they held no harm. More than this, Jesus bade His disciples possess themselves with the same assurance, and the power, both of apostles and saints, in the later ages to go

unafraid through dangers manifold, has been the wonder of the world.

Above the fears of Jewish ceremonial Jesus stood supreme. Its great truths He revered, but its small defilements He ignored. The unclean, the leper, and the dead He touched with hands of healing and of life. The Sabbath laws He shattered and abolished because they had become a burden. These fractures of Jewish custom raised against Him a storm of hatred and outcry—yet He was calm and confident before the priests as He was in His disregard of ritual. Even at the last, when torture and death were in sight, with the shadow of the cross upon His path, there was no moment of shrinking or of fear. The dangers of the betrayal, clearly foreseen; the mockeries of Ananias' house and Pilate's court, the mad fury of the mob crying out for His life, did not move Him from His calm serenity and fearlessness.

And yet it is too much to say that Jesus was incapable of fear. Such natures there may be, but they are not the finest. Men have been known to face deadly perils and not flinch, to suffer tortures and make no outcry. But this may be the result of callous and hardened natures, indifferent to hatred and incapable of pain. Not of such fibre

was Jesus. His fearlessness arose from a lofty vision of eternal interests, a concern for immortal ends, a fear of more tragic failure, which made all small apprehensions impossible. The mother forgets her danger in the peril of her child. She is fearless because a higher fear possesses her. The physician faces the peril of contagion to save his patient's life. The higher fear of failure absorbs the lesser fear of self. Jesus subdued His fears in the presence of the larger danger. Thus His life was made complete. "He was heard for His godly fear." There were deadly dangers that He well might dread: the acceptance of the lesser good at the moment of the great temptation; the danger that the disciples might fix their hearts upon the hollow glories of an earthly rule; the possibility that after all had been achieved and suffered, the world might not accept His plan of life, a danger so deadly that it well-nigh crushed Him in the darkness under the olive trees; the loss of any chance to do the Father's will and finish His work.

The fearlessness of Jesus is the trumpet note of courage to the Church. In His fellowship and through the power of His example all may be fearless. The lesser dangers He disregarded and overcame, we need not

dread. Some of them, like the dread diseases which once swept multitudes out of life, have already been banished, in large measure, by that skill which is increasingly the gift of God to man. Some of them, like the malice of evil men and the giant wrongs that vex the world, decrease and withdraw as the kingdom of God grows in power. The smaller fears may well be forgotten in the presence of the greater. The higher fear which possessed Him, we may well aspire to feel. It is not a nature incapable of fear which men should covet. It is rather one filled with reverence and awe for the Highest, in which all lesser fears are absorbed and disappear.

XV

THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST

WHEN Adolf Monod preached the sermon on "The Tears of St. Paul" Amiel, who was one of his auditors, found a new world of human interest and sympathy opening before him in the character of the apostle. No one can contemplate the scene at the grave of Lazarus, where in the shortest verse in the Bible the tears of Jesus are revealed, without feeling that new insight has been gained regarding the heart of the Master. For of all the causes which operate to make men and women weep, one alone brought tears from the eyes of Jesus. Those "lachrymæ Christi" of which the early Church had so much to say, but which our more prosperous and unreflecting age has almost forgotten, were not shed over any personal sorrows, disappointments or vexations. In that revealing moment, conscious that His friend was about to respond to the call which reaches even beyond death, He yet found His heart melting in companionship with that grief which was

unconscious of the real joy so close at hand, and in deepest sympathy with the sorrowing sisters and the loving friends, "Jesus wept."

In that moment He understood the depth of human sadness which is the lot of an imperfect race. The agony of disappointed hopes, the mourning over love's defeats, the cry of anguish over closing graves, all these Jesus felt as He stood before the tomb of Lazarus. He saw the mantles of darkness which sorrow had flung over the world. He felt, with pangs as of personal loss, that departure of a loving and gracious presence at whose going all life seems to go. And He knew that all men rested under its shadow.

> "There is no flock, however watched and tended,
> But one dead lamb is there;
> There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
> But has one vacant chair."

If in that moment Jesus found it impossible to share the grief of the friends about Him, knowing in His heart "what He would do," He nevertheless entered deeply into that tragedy of life which found its disclosure in a thousand groups, where love bent with unhoping affection above silent dust, with no comforter near to speak the potent word of life. More than this, He knew that death

is one of the lesser evils of human experience. We can bury our dead rejoicing in their virtues and their unending life. But there are deeper wells of sorrow still. Life is often a harder master than death. This vision of a suffering world came to the Saviour in that hour, and in tenderness and sympathy for all, "Jesus wept."

The scene at the grave in Bethany discloses an entire continent in the rounded completeness of Jesus' character. No quality displayed by Him is more essential to His life than this. It was a part of His inmost life that He should bear upon His heart the griefs of other men. It not only became Him as a merciful and faithful high priest that He should be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; it was the part of that gracious nature of His which was most vital that He should find Himself keenly sensitive to our distresses.

The objects of Jesus' sympathy were a great host. His days were filled with ministering tenderness, His nights with prayerful renewals of strength for the labour of love. "He went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him."

His coming was awaited by the distressed

with the eagerness of watchers who wait for the dawn. His advent was the signal for all afflicted to gather about Him with confident hope. His touch gave fresh life: His word was with power. Had Jesus been inspired by any lesser motive than deep human sympathy and the passion of helpfulness to those in need, such experiences would have been inexpressibly sad, depressing beyond words to describe. A physician may find compensation for his efforts in behalf of the most loathsome cases of disease in the scientific interest he takes in them. One who works constantly among even the lowest and most repulsive forms of suffering will gain a certain habit of mind by which the labour becomes in a measure commonplace and ceases to distress. But neither of these considerations weigh in our estimate of Jesus. His sympathy was spontaneous, instant, keen. He suffered with those He helped. And nowhere is disease so loathsome as in the East where Jesus lived. And what it is in our own time, because of squalor, poverty and indifference, that it must have been, and worse, in the days of the Son of Man. For some small fruits of Western and Christian effort are seen already even in lands of the Crescent.

Every depressing fact of oriental life Jesus met and with it all He felt the most urgent sympathy. For old people, neglected and lonely, for little children mistreated and untaught, for women despised and enslaved, for men ground down under cruel tasks, for the common people held in contempt by the rich or the powerful, for all who were in any trouble of body or spirit—Jesus took thought of love, and in their behalf He spent His life. The multitudes pressed upon Him for healing; the lepers cried out for His cleansing touch; the blind followed Him with supplications; the lame importuned Him for help; and none ever called in vain. Into the problem of every sufferer He entered with personal attention, under every burden He stooped. "Himself bore our sicknesses and carried our sorrows."

The good will of Christ expressed itself not only in behalf of the afflicted themselves, but to help those who were distressed over the troubles of others. The centurion whose servant was sick Jesus comforted with the assurance of recovery. The mother near Sidon, though denied for a time the blessing she sought only that triumphant faith might win its reward, was made happy with the promises of the Lord. The healing of the

palsied man, let down from the roof, was more because of the faith of his four friends than for his own sake. The raising of the daughter of Jairus was the fulfillment of a promise to the stricken father.

But the works of healing, though more conspicuous as proofs of the sympathy of Jesus, are not more convincing than His compassion for the people when He saw them in any need. His heart went out to the multitudes who seemed to Him like sheep without a shepherd. His counsel to those who were anxious about the morrow and its good was less the advice of a teacher than the sympathetic message of a friend. For the labouring and burdened He took constant thought, and his best comfort to them was to bid them adopt His plan of confident and trustful life; "Come unto Me," said He. For the nation easily misled by false prophets, He had only sympathy, for the city of His people He had only tearful pleading. It was not alone because Jerusalem had rejected Him that He wept above it on those slopes where Titus later mourned over the tragedy of the doomed capital. It was that its people had rejected life and chosen the ruin that so soon followed. For the publicans, who had long known the scorn of popular condemnation, Jesus felt such

compassion as won a member of that company to repentance and another away from his unsocial life. Upon women of blemished life, on whom the public censure had already fallen, Jesus looked with discernment of the goodness left within and refused assent to their public condemnation, or rebuke to their gratitude. Mothers craving, perhaps even with superstitious hope, the touch of His hand upon their children, were encouraged by Him, for He knew their anxiety over the little ones God had given them.

For His own disciples the sympathy of Jesus is even more revealing. To the two followers of the imprisoned John whose heart was torn with conflicts of doubt and hope, Jesus spoke in words that must have brought calm to the troubled prophet. To the disciples gathered about Him He more than once gave the cheering word, "Fear not," when He knew their way was hedged with trouble and their future dark with apprehension. To the women after His resurrection He said, "Go tell My disciples and Peter that they shall see Me," a word that must have rolled a heavy load of despair, though not of regret, from the heart of him who had thrice denied the Lord. Nor can one forget how Jesus, thinking onward into that career which lay

before the apostles, gave them tender and sympathetic assurance that though they should stand before kings and judges, though they should be hated of all men for His sake, though they should suffer the loss of houses and lands, wives and children, yea, and life itself, they might hold close to their hearts the assurance that their reward was certain, and that He was with them all the days.

If one needed a single additional evidence of the intimate and personal character of Jesus' sympathy, it might well be found in those exquisite touches of thoughtfulness for others, such as the comment on the sacrifice of the widow who gave the two mites, or the appreciation of the gift of the woman with the ointment, or the rare insight into the personal experience of those He blessed, such as made Him bid them give the newly raised daughter of the ruler something to eat, or to say to the friends of the enswathed Lazarus, "Loose him, and let him go."

What is this quality of sympathy which Jesus so constantly revealed? Certainly it is something more than amiable pity for distress. Such the priest and Levite might have felt, who nevertheless passed their wounded countryman on the other side. As its meaning teaches, sympathy is never in-

different. It is a "suffering with" the distressed. It is the "passion of doing good." It is the satisfaction of self in the helping of others. A reader of the woes of soldiers left to die on a battle-field knows the emotion of pity. It is a Florence Nightingale who sympathizes with them by nursing them back to life. One learns with regret and concern of the wretched lives of the lepers in the penal colonies in the south seas. It is a Father Damien who by his self-devotion and tireless labours, ending only in the common death of the afflicted ones, reveals what sympathy in its truest form can mean.

Herein is seen the revelation of God's life in Christ. His is not the passionless and unsuffering life which the medieval saints loved to picture. Brahminism might contemplate with admiration a god who spent his eternities in the calm of an unconcerned and indifferent existence. Such is not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Who comforteth us in all our tribulations, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." It has always been the satisfaction of the saints, both in the old days and the new that in the divine Father they possess a compassionate and sympathetic friend.

"Never a sigh of passion or of pity,
Never a wail for weakness or for wrong,
Has not its archive in the angel's city,
Finds not its echo in the Deathless song."

It is this new revelation of God that Jesus has made clear to us. We know the Father, because He is reflected in our Lord, and the sympathy of Jesus is beyond all conception great.

"Not as one blind and deaf to our beseeching,
Neither forgetful that we are but dust,
Not as from heavens too high for our upreaching
Coldly sublime, intolerably just:—
Nay, but Thou knowest us, Lord Christ, Thou knowest;
Well Thou rememberest our feeble frame,
Thou canst conceive our highest and our lowest,
Pulses of nobleness and aches of shame."

The work of Christ in the world has been accompanied by the growth of the spirit of sympathy. Wherever the Gospel has gone, there compassion for suffering and earnest sympathy have made their way. The thousand proofs of this beneficent expression of the kingdom of God need no restatement.

But power comes through sympathy. It is the secret of redemptive effort. It is the key which unlocks the hearts of men. To rejoice with those who rejoice is a part of the revela-

tion of sympathy ; and it is sometimes more difficult than to weep with those who weep. To enter with solicitude into the troubled and doubting experience of some soul not far from the kingdom of God may be the only avenue of approach. To hold the hand of a man passing through a great temptation, and assure him that you suffer with him, gives him a new strength to win the battle. To see things with the eyes of others, servants, workers, assistants, public helpers, the humblest and most hesitant, reveals the spirit of the Master, and finds the spirit of mankind. The sympathy of Jesus, revealed in His tears at the tomb of His friend, opens the gates of comfort to all the world, and points out the pathway of invitation and of power to all His followers.

" Jesus wept, those tears are over,
But His heart is still the same.
Kinsman, friend, and elder brother,
Is His everlasting name.
Truly none can love like Thee
Gracious one of Bethany."

XVI

THE PATRIOTISM OF CHRIST

THERE are three seasons in the year when the American mind is turned by current events to reflection upon national interests. The closely associated anniversaries of Lincoln and Washington form the first. The fairly close relationship of Memorial Day and Independence Day makes the second. And the autumn festival of Thanksgiving, which is also a national day of remembrance, constitutes the third.

Every man worthy of the name is at heart a patriot. The Chinese, with little knowledge of the world, but with a proud sense of his country's greatness, speaks of it as the "Middle Kingdom" quite in the centre of what he fancies to be the flat disc of the earth's outflung extent. The other nations of which he has heard are but border lands, the mere fringes of his own wide possessions. The Japanese have given the world an astonishing exhibition of the limits to which patriotism can be carried. When the West-

ern world heard that Admiral Togo had given orders that no communications should be sent to him from his family during his absence at sea, lest it should distract his mind from the duty of the hour, the question was raised whether there was something lacking in the tenderer and more humane side of this interesting people, or whether this was only one of many amazing proofs of devotion to the flag. The people of Poland have never ceased to mourn over their lost liberty, and to venerate the land now divided between Russia and Germany by the heartless compact of spoliation. The Lithuanians and Finns, deprived of the open use of their native speech by the edicts of the lands into which they have been helplessly absorbed, and forbidden to print a word in the beloved tongues, keep up on our own soil an active propaganda in behalf of their national hopes, and secretly send tons of printed matter among their people in the fatherlands. The Irish patriot exiled from his country for political agitation against the hated power of England sings of his distracted land :

" Wert thou all I could wish thee,
Great, glorious and free,
First flower of the earth,
And first gem of the sea,

I might hail thee with prouder,
With happier brow;
But O, could I love thee
More deeply than now?"

The most wretched of beings would be the "Man Without a Country," of one of whom Dr. Hale has written. Far better the lot of an exile, driven forth like the Hebrews of old, into the unhappy and homesick experience of wanderers among strangers than to know that the land itself casts forth its unworthy son, to go orphaned and miserable through the world, without national institutions to cherish, without a fatherland, and without a flag under which to live and die.

If a country is to be loved in proportion to its greatness and opportunity, surely the American should be the truest, happiest and most devoted of patriots. A broad land, which, as Mr. Gladstone said, offers one of the most expansive fields for national greatness ever afforded a people, marvellous natural resources, a timely advent into the world's history, which was of itself an enormous asset in the nation's favour, and a history so providentially guided that it affords an inspiring proof of the divine presence in the affairs of men, are all factors calculated to confirm in the heart of our

citizens a sense of world-wide significance and importance in American life and institutions. No celebrant of the fame of Washington or Lincoln, no Independence Day orator, has ever overstated the prodigal dower and promise of America.

If such sentiments of patriotism are to be looked for in every normal and high-souled man, how does Jesus meet this test, and what is the message which His life bears to the world on the theme of patriotism? He was born in a country, which, though it is not inappropriately called "the least of all lands," has an imperial place in the life of the world. It is small as measured by units of extent, and has few of the advantages which make a region inviting to seekers after natural wealth or commercial opportunity. Yet its history was second to none in wide range of influence. Its great men, from Joshua to John, have wrought imperishable memorials for themselves wherever deeds are weighed or words are treasured. Jesus grew up in the midst of the inspiring scenes of this history. He loved His country as a sincere, generous and noble-minded man could not fail to do. Its mountains, waters, cities and countrysides were more precious to Him than to most of His people, as He perceived more deeply the

meaning of His country's message to the nations.

Within this land He spent His life of service and met His death of agony. To it He limited His ministries of love and sympathy. He definitely announced that He could not go elsewhere, and that He must devote to His own people the powers of healing and instruction to which His strength was consecrated. This restriction grew out of no insular prejudice, or indifference to the wider world needs, but arose from the necessity of directing all energies to the choice and training of the men who could later give His Gospel interpretation in the regions beyond. Into the politics of Palestine Jesus never entered. But the reason was not His lack of interest in national affairs, or His unconcern for the happiness of His people. His tears shed over an unrepentant Jerusalem show how deep was the love He bore His nation and its capital. Demosthenes could not have felt greater affection for Athens nor Savonarola for Florence than Jesus for Jerusalem. But in the unhappy estate of the land political action was impossible. The nation groaned under a crushing burden of imperial insolence and taxation. Power was ruling with an iron hand. Any effort at political

reform was useless in that age of tyranny. Jesus could only give His disciples the principles in accordance with which national and municipal righteousness might be sought in more hopeful days.

Yet with all of His deep love of His land and His people, Jesus perceived the inherent goodness in all men, and the value of all nations in the sight of God. He was touched by the request of the Greeks at the feast to see Him, and turned away with sadness from even their implied request to visit their cities. For the despised Samaritans He evermore expressed His good will. He immortalized one of that race by making him the hero of one of His most pregnant parables, and to another He revealed for the first time the secret of His own mission. Closely as He kept Himself to His own land and people, it was that He might make more effective His later mission to all the world. No human being was outside the range of His wide interest. The Roman centurion of Capernaum and the heathen mother of Syro-Phœnicia were hardly less the objects of His concern than the needy of His own land.

It is a narrow-minded man who loves his own land alone. This is the usual attitude of the traveller who crosses the ocean for

the first time. Most that he sees looks strange, and therefore either bad or absurd. He compares all he beholds with what he left "back home" to the infinite discredit of the unfamiliar. Against most of the people he meets he cherishes a secret or open hostility because their speech, their garments and their manners are "foreign." At last he comes home declaring with immature judgment that he wouldn't live anywhere else but in America, and that all the rest of the world is hardly worth regard. This is the callow opinion of a novice. Further travel would teach him that in every nation there are gracious and beautiful elements, that most people are very agreeable and obliging when they are better known, and that the outer world has much which youthful and enthusiastic America might learn with profit. It is only a narrow and provincial spirit that wishes to shut out the wider life. Sometimes it is the spirit of commercial greed which attempts to accomplish this by walls of tariff isolation. Sometimes it is the spirit of prejudice and jealousy which resents any influence from without. Neither is the spirit of Jesus, and neither represents His type of patriotism.

Jesus loved His nation chiefly for its gifts

and opportunities of world-wide service. No people had so much to give that the nations required. He would not let His people sink to a narrow hostility to their neighbours. He told them that Elijah was sent not to the poor of Israel but to a widow of Sidon. He bade them remember that Elisha gave to Naaman, a Syrian captain, the attention that might have cured many lepers in his own land. The Jews resented these words of Jesus as a proof of unpatriotic sympathy with the heathen. But He strove to teach them that such sympathy was the glory of any people, and one of the chief ends of the kingdom of God.

Such must be our patriotism to-day. If it exhausts itself in laudation of our own land and institutions it is unworthy of the destiny we have reason to claim. If it satisfies itself in commercial success and mechanical progress, then it will only be trying the old experiments and inviting the old failures. Is America really "Time's noblest offspring, and the last," as Bishop Berkeley sang? Then it will be because she uses her immense opportunities not in the selfish indulgence of her own caprices, but in world-wide ministries of good. The American is known the world over as the greatest of

promoters. He builds railroads in China, digs mines in Africa, trains armies in Russia, and controls the price of real estate in Europe. Does he also by his going forth into all lands bring peace and good will, or hatred and strife? Does he plant thorns or fig trees? Briars or myrtle trees? Do the nations wait for his coming with joy or fear? With confidence or distrust? Is he to be the true leader of the nations, the noble pioneer in the vanguard of the world's progress, or only a self-seeking adventurer, who must in turn give way to some nation with nobler ideals?

These are our days of opportunity and testing. No nation has ever been permanent or truly influential whose chief purpose has been acquisition. Israel tried it and failed. Greece attempted it and fell. Rome, gorged with the spoil of nations, went crashing to its doom, "insane with pride and foul with harlotries." Old Italy passed the same way, because she had not learned the lesson. It is only the nation that lives for the world that can abide. A people's empire is to be won by gaining for itself the larger view, the patriotism of Jesus.

XVII

THE UNIQUENESS OF CHRIST

ALL life is made up of the effort to understand and answer great questions. When Œdipus met the sphinx on his journey and was confronted with her baffling question, "What creature walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three at night?" he knew that life and death hung upon the answer. The story of humanity is the story of great inquiries. What is the origin of life? Whence came the beginnings of sin? What is the explanation of the mystery of suffering? These and other great inquiries stand like barriers around the little space in which the soul of man is permitted to range.

But no mystery that has entered into human experience has ever been greater than that which Jesus presented to His auditors when He demanded of them an explanation of His own character. He was the most unaccountable of men. It seemed at first as if every element of His life was so commonplace as to make inquiry unnecessary, and to

satisfy all curiosity. There was no mystery about His conduct. He came and went as the simplest of the citizens of His land. He made no effort to conceal His work from any man, and when at last He was arraigned by the highest tribunal of His own people, He resented the insinuation of an esoteric and deceptive ministry by boldly asserting that He had lived among them with entire openness, that He had done nothing in secret, and that the people were able to give ample testimony regarding the nature of His purposes.

And yet Jesus' life was full of mystery even to His most intimate friends. It seemed strange to Nathaniel that one who claimed to be a teacher from God should come from so obscure a place as Nazareth. It seemed strange to John the Baptist, imprisoned in the dungeons of Machærus, that the One of whom he had asserted boldness and indignant judgment upon all sin should be going about through the country as the mildest of preachers and the most sympathetic of friends. To the multitude at Capernaum, who looked upon Jesus' works of healing, there was a mystery about Him which they could not penetrate, not merely because He wrought cures, for such acts were not unknown in

other circles, but because of His constant manifestation of interest in the lives of the humblest of their number.

In Decapolis, when the maniac yielded to the spell of Jesus' personality and sat clothed and in his right mind among the other hearers by the margin of the sea, there was a feeling of utter astonishment on the part of all the beholders, and they said, "With authority He commands even the demons and they are subject to Him." At the close of the Sermon on the Mount the people were astonished at His preaching, for He spoke with an authority that the scribes had never approached.

With wonder not unmixed with terror the disciples looked on the mystery of the transfiguration. At the inquiry made by the authorities the chief priest seemed to voice the universal desire of the times to know more of this strange being, when he said, "What sayest thou of Thyself?" The Roman centurion who witnessed the tragedy of Calvary came away deeply troubled in spirit, saying, "Truly, this man was a son of God"; and Thomas, the last of the disciples to meet the risen Lord, was overwhelmed at his own temerity in demanding visible proof of the great event, when he cast himself be-

fore Jesus, crying, "My Lord and my God." Every one of these individuals or groups was busy asking questions concerning Jesus. He was the inexplicable mystery of His time, and in spite of the larger knowledge which eighteen centuries have brought concerning Him, He is still the most unique phenomenon in history.

It was not strange then that He should ask of His friends some expression of their views of Him. He did not expect them to be able to offer a definition or to name Him by any title that should adequately declare His nature. But the value of His ministry to them and to all men depended in large degree on the answer that could be made to such questions as, "What think ye of the Christ?" and "Who say ye that I am?" If the call of the Christ is to Himself, to His attitude, point of view and programme, then it is of supreme moment that one should find some adequate answer to the questions regarding His nature.

Four answers have been returned to these questions. There may be others, but these four cover most of that territory in which the value of the life of Jesus to humanity is recognized. The first is the answer given by the people and repeated by the disciples.

When Jesus took the group of His followers into the quiet region beyond the Jewish frontier, He asked them what was the popular report concerning Himself. They answered at once that the people thought of Him as a prophet risen from the dead. There was of course a variety of views as to which prophet He might be. Some thought of the recently murdered John the Baptist. And even Herod himself was inclined to believe that John had somehow come back to life, and was renewing his ministry in the person of the Man of Nazareth. Others thought He was Elijah or Jeremiah or some other of the Old Testament leaders.

And this is perhaps the first answer that the average man is likely to make regarding Jesus. Not that he insists upon an actual revival from the dead. But none the less his standard of greatness lies in the past. Most men are content to assert of an unexplained character that it is like somebody who has lived in former times. The minds of such people are turned to the past. Their norm of greatness lies in that direction. But Jesus had no desire merely to revive ancient ideals. He took the best that the nation had to offer, but gave it an entirely new value. And then He revealed an ideal totally differ-

ent from all that the past had known; an ideal so true, so startling, so difficult to realize and yet so genuinely capable of attainment that men were astonished beyond measure, and looked about for some standard by which they could classify and describe this unique life.

Jesus was no mere dead man come to life. There is no value in that sort of reincarnation. What the world needs is the new spirit that comes from a frank facing of the future and a programme that will include all its potencies and possibilities. It was to that future that Jesus turned Himself. He was interested in the past, as it gave a point of departure for His work. But He held Himself supremely superior to it and independent of its judgments. He could afford, therefore, to dismiss the popular impression regarding Himself and to wait for a sentiment closer to the truth.

A second answer to the question is found in the statement of the officers who were sent by the authorities to arrest Jesus. They found Him teaching in the usual public places of Jerusalem. They threaded their way among the crowds and approached close to Him. But when they heard His word and marked the authority of His bearing, and

His perfect mastery of Himself and His audience, they hesitated to perform their commission, and at last returned to the priests with the statement, "Never man so spake." Their explanation was that Jesus was a genius, an unusual man, one of those rare personalities that produce upon the world the sense of exalted power by reason of singular gifts of mind.

This explanation of Jesus, that He was a religious genius, has been given many times, and in plausible words. Why should He not be placed in the Hall of Fame along with the great geniuses of the world? Why is He not to be made a companion of Homer, Æschylus, Plato, Moses, the Buddha, Virgil, Dante and Shakespeare? It is the simple fact that in spite of all such efforts, no classification of this sort is ever quite convincing. A recent writer has produced a book whose thesis is the contribution of religious geniuses to the higher life of humanity. His list includes Jeremiah, the Buddha, Socrates, Jesus, St. Paul, Marcus Aurelius, Augustine, Mohammed and Martin Luther. But even those who are most concerned to write Jesus down as only the best of teachers feel a certain incongruity in associating Him baldly with even the best of such spiritual heroes as only their equal.

As a matter of fact, genius is no fit designation for those qualities that lift Jesus so incomparably above the average, or even the best, attainments of our common life. Goethe was a genius, but he did not hesitate to suck the juices out of every virtue or friendship, and cast the rind away as worthless. The same egotism and self-delusion dwelt in the soul of Napoleon the Great, the master destroyer of modern history, who has left France a bitter atonement to make through generations of impoverished manhood and defeated hopes.

Perhaps Tolstoi would represent religious genius at its best. Certainly there is much that is tender and fascinating in the life of this devoted apostle of literal Christianity. His interpretations of the life of Jesus have been in a measure convincing, not because they seem true to the character of the Nazarene so much as because they have found enforcement in the single-hearted self-devotion of this peasant prince of Russia. And yet those who knew Tolstoi most intimately bear witness to the impractical and visionary character of his ideals, and to the difficulty of maintaining with him long a relation of personal intimacy. Genius makes inexorable demands upon good will and the ordi-

nary courtesies of life. And this is true whatever be the range in which it manifests itself, whether in science or literature or poetry. A certain allowance must be made for the eccentricities of genius. It is never quite normal. It is hard to live with, and it is admirable partly because of its rarity.

All this is totally at variance with the character of Jesus. Those who knew Him most intimately were at the same time impressed most by the wonder of His life and by its simple human virtues of humility, friendliness and good will. It was a life that was absolutely livable in all circumstances. It never failed when the high test of universal use was applied. And therefore the attempt to account for Jesus by the definition of genius falls to the ground, because it meets almost none of the facts.

A third answer was given by the disciples themselves at the time when Jesus propounded His great inquiry. Indeed it was their opinion which He coveted. The statements of the multitude were nothing worth to Him. He wished to determine whether or not His ministry with the twelve had taught them the great truth He wanted them to know. And so He passed lightly and without warning from commonplace inquiries re-

garding public opinion to the most searching and intimate question of His life, "Who say ye that I am?"

There was in the minds of all Jews of that period a figure familiar by prophetic words, but far more by apocalyptic dreams and common daily conversations. The Jewish race for generations had expected a human deliverer. Successive involvements in depressing and cruel slaveries had made them turn for relief from the unhappy present to the ideal future. The centre of their hope was this Messianic hero, who was presently to come, as they believed, and vindicate the power of God by the destruction of their foes and the exaltation of their institutions to the supreme place in the circle of the nations.

Jesus had refrained from the use of this familiar conception because it fitted so little the ideals He cherished regarding His own ministry. Yet there was a certain value even in so crass a view. Perhaps if He could have chosen freely, He would have avoided the entire vocabulary of Messianism. But He knew the value of a familiar watchword, and when now and then His friends dropped expressions that hinted of this view He let them pass without rebuke.

But His greatness had made its due im-

press upon the minds of His followers. Little by little they advanced Him in their regard until no conception short of that of the Messiah, the highest of which they could conceive at that time, would suffice to describe Him. There was genuine reverence in their attitude. It was the noblest thing they could say of their Master that He was the Messiah.

Therefore, when He asked of them the question it was greatly significant that they chose this phrase in which to describe Him. They did not understand Him fully, but at least they gave Him the most exalted place in their regard. To them He was no mere dead prophet come to life. To them He was no mere genius, such as Moses or Isaiah had been. He was the Messiah, the official leader of His people, the One who was to bring about their emancipation, even as the prophets had dreamed.

There is something pathetic and alluring in Jesus' joy at their response. With all His dissatisfaction with the common Messianic hopes, and in spite of His intimate knowledge of the superficial views regarding the Messiah, cherished even by His own disciples, He could but rejoice that they had given Him at once the highest place, and had looked about

wistfully in the effort to find the most eloquent term in which to record their conviction of His person and work. To Him it was a touching proof that He could trust them without reserve. The future might bring to them disillusionment and grief, but it could never break their hold upon this elemental idea as to His place in the spiritual order. He was willing to accept a political and worldly title in their regard if by so doing He could make sure that they enthroned Him as teacher, prophet and Lord in the coronation room of their souls.

Of course, this answer of theirs was but partial and temporary. The world soon passed out of the period when the coming of a Jewish Messiah was of any concern to it. And the Jews themselves have for the most part long ago seen the mistake of the political hopes which were so keen in the days of Jesus. The vocabulary of Messianism is as dead and meaningless to-day as those apocalyptic hopes upon which Judaism founded its life in the four centuries that followed the Maccabean struggle. And to-day the word Messiah is one which has to be galvanized into life by the revival of ancient Jewish views in order to make it serviceable in even the slightest degree.

Jesus was never the Jewish Messiah in any such sense as the nation expected. He had to take the term and eviscerate it, casting out all its worldly content. Then He filled it with a new and sublimer meaning, and in so far as He used it at all, this truer, more spiritual content informed it. But the term has little meaning in the religious vocabulary of to-day. Jesus is no functionary, no official, as the title implies. And those who make much of the term are quite as likely to err on the side of formalism and legalism as the bearers of the other definitions have erred on the side of meagre and inadequate views of His work. It is only as the conception of the Messiah leads on from Jewish to Christian ideas of the work of Christ that it has any value. And thus though it is a better definition than that given by those who saw in Jesus only a dead man come to life, or a religious genius, it must yield place to nobler and more final words.

A fourth answer supplied by the New Testament meets in every regard the demands of the case. It is given in different language, but with essentially the same significance in the two great interpretions of Jesus, the two bodies of literature that are the most revealing parts of the New Testament, the Epistles

of Paul and the Johannine writings. In both Jesus is conceived as the human expression of the life of God. In the one there is the description of that assumption of human nature which was the acceptance of the likeness of man, and obedience even to the sacrificial law of death. In the other there is the affirmation that Christ as the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. Neither of these literatures contain any speculative definition of the character of Christ. They are not concerned to insist upon this or that view of His nature. To them He is no dead prophet revived; He is no religious genius; nor is He a mere Messiah, a functionary and official of reviving Judaism.

He is the normal expression of God's life in terms of flesh and blood. He is marked by the three great characteristics of a supreme interpreter of the divine. He knows God as no one else of all the sons of men has known Him. He lives a life which is no mere deliberate effort to attain perfection, but is the happy and constant manifestation of the noblest traits of character, because He lived in conscious relationship with God. His humility, optimism, friendliness, sincerity, serenity and spirituality made Him the normal man, the only one in the long range of his-

tory. It was not without significance that Jesus spoke of Himself evermore as the Son of Man, the one in whom humanity was actually expressed in all of its nobler elements, and the only one in whom it had ever reached such expression.

And again Jesus added to His intuitive and masterful sense of God and His perfect life a programme for humanity so exalted and satisfying that the centuries have consented that it is the framework in which the final social order must be cast.

Jesus is then the living expression of God's life in terms of humanity, and He is the supreme manifestation of the normal humanity. In Him God and man meet in a far more complete sense than the schoolmen ever dreamed. The uniqueness of Christ's life does not consist in its variation from the norms of being, but rather in its conformity to the noblest standards. It is this combination of uniqueness and normality that is its most astonishing feature. Others may be unique because they are abnormal. He attains His supremacy by the complete expression of those great virtues which are the recognized standard of all human conduct. In other words, Jesus is unique because He is supremely imitable. His life stands out

from all others in virtue of the fact that it is the one character of history most easy to reproduce. This is the mark of His finality; this is the uniqueness of Christ.

And this is the ground of His summons to all men to come to Him, and make His life their own. In such a summons He has made clear His own conception both of the imitableness and supremacy of His own career.

XVIII

THE PERENNIAL CHRIST

AS in the pictures of the last supper, Jesus Christ has become the centre of the religious world. To the disciples of His own day, though in a less experienced sense, He was the centre and the totality of life. He realized all their ideals of personal character and conduct. He wakened them to a world of beauty and of hope of which they had no former conception. They were simple men of Galilee, but in their experience with Him it seemed as if the little territory in which He walked and worked had become the whole world. Even so trained and experienced a man as Paul felt a rapture in the companionship of Jesus for which he found no adequate expression. Christ filled and transcended the universe of these His first interpreters, even as light fills and transcends the rainbow.

It was a static world into which Jesus came. The modern conception of progress

from stage to stage of development had not as yet dawned upon the human mind. To be sure there was constant movement and alteration. Men passed away and doctrines were changed. But there was a feeling that at the heart of things there was calm and rest. The highest compliment the early disciples could pay their Master was to relate Him to those fixed categories of life in which they placed their confidence. They liked to believe in institutions that would not change. It was their feeling that the Roman empire was a part of the fixed order of things. They had no idea that human society would ever be greatly different from its current outward aspects. They only felt that into that fixed and determined world of the first century Christianity would enter as a new and vital force, and that Christ would somehow come to be its dominating personality, but would remain fixed and unchangeable, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. That was the highest honour they could pay Him in their estimate of permanent influence.

But in reality this is a world of change and not of fixed values. Progress has been the order of its life from the very beginning. Its physical structure and the story of the

creatures that have dwelt upon it can only be understood in the light thrown upon these problems by the principle of evolution. Not a single phase of that Roman world has persisted without modifications and changes that have almost totally obliterated its first characteristics. Government, education, views of nature, ideals of art, practical industries, business enterprises and religious doctrines have all taken on aspects removed by whole diameters from their former character. In the territory which to-day constitutes what was once the Roman empire there are few surviving memorials of the conditions prevalent in the first Christian century.

In so mutable a world it would be a great thing to say that any institution or science or individual character could remain unchanged. And yet precisely this contention is possible to those who hold Jesus in the highest regard. From certain standpoints it is quite permissible for the Church to claim that through all the ages the Master has remained one and the same supreme figure in the religious life of the world. He is to-day as always in the past the same, and will be such to the end.

Yet in direct contrast with this thesis is seen the perennial and unique timeliness of

the character of our Lord, which adjusts Him to every generation of human history. And from this angle it is quite possible to say that Jesus is never twice the same. Like Proteus, the old man of the sea, who changed his form continually, it may be said that Jesus is constantly seen in new lights, and with new elements of power and attractiveness as the generations go on.

We have in the earliest Christian literature the disclosure of this very quality which is so striking. There is a Christ of the synoptic Gospels; another of the writings of Paul; still a third as viewed by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and quite a fourth as involved in the Johannine Scriptures. These are not contrasted and mutually exclusive figures. They are rather the successive and enlarging appreciations of the character of Jesus realized by the Church within the first century.

His disciples were astonished at the marvel of His life and words. They hastened to make Him known to their fellow men. But even as they looked upon Him and bore testimony to His vital and life-saving work, He grew upon them and became ever more masterful and divine. From day to day the Christ of the New Testament took on larger

significance. He kept ever in front of the advancing column of His followers. They never found Him twice the same, because they were always discovering new elements in His personality.

The words of Robinson of Leyden to his comrades as they sailed away to find the new world have value for every generation of Christians. We have never fathomed the depths of the Word of God. New light is constantly breaking out from the Holy Scriptures, as human capacity for their interpretation is enlarged. And the Christ of whom the New Testament speaks goes onward before the Church with essentially new characteristics in every generation.

No new revelations are added to the classic oracles of the faith, nor is there need of such; and yet the claim that many Christians have made that new revelations are constantly received from God is justified by the new light that emerges from the Scriptures and from the character of Jesus which they reveal. The spirit of God still bears witness with the spirit of man. The days of the divine message have not ceased. Christ speaks to His Church with even greater effectiveness today than in the days of His flesh, and from every hilltop of the advancing horizon He

beckons His people to new attainments of holiness and power.

The character of Jesus as the centuries have meditated upon Him has changed constantly. No two centuries have given Him the same definition. And it is this perennial capacity for reinterpretation in terms of present worth that constitutes one of the most unique and convincing elements in the character of our Lord. To the first group of disciples He was the teacher of Galilee who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed. To the Christians of the closing decade of the first century He was the expected king, about to return with superhuman power to crush His enemies and reward His friends. To the believers of the early centuries He was the uplifted and enthroned Christ; a deity no longer incarnate, but now lifted to the right hand of power, a transcendent Lord of the spirit. To the Christians of the Middle Ages He was the supreme priestly figure of the universe, the invisible head of a majestic and ordered hierarchy, whose visible representatives assumed complete authority in His name. To the theologians of the Reformation He was the Saviour who by His sacrificial ministry of death had brought redemption to all who

gave Him the unhesitating submission of personal faith. And to the Church of to-day He is the Son of Man, the elder brother of the race, the atoning Friend and Saviour, who, because His fortunes were one with the career and fate of humanity, took upon Himself the supreme task of the world's awakening to brotherhood and sympathy.

What the Christ of the future is to be no prophet can now predict. It is only a comparatively small fraction of the human race that has yet attacked the problem of the real function of Jesus in human history. Even this fraction, which we call Christendom, has had a succession of startling disclosures as to the universal and all-sufficient character of our Lord. What contributions the men of other races yet to become Christian may make is a question so suggestive and inspiring that the mind trembles in anticipation of what coming centuries are to bring.

It is these very considerations which furnish response to one of the most searching questions the present age is asking regarding Jesus. We have heard it many times expressed in different terms, but essentially the demands are of a single order. This is the question, Is a life so limited in its experiences and in its pronouncements upon the values

of human conduct to be accepted as normative for all times and peoples? In other words, How can we claim that the life of Jesus of Nazareth, which only lasted for something like a third of a century, and was passed within the narrow environments of the province of Syria, can become authoritative for the men and women of the twentieth century, and of lands far remote from that Oriental region? What right has the Christ to call all men unto Himself? If Jesus is to be taken seriously as a world teacher, why did He not pronounce upon many questions which He apparently never considered? What can the twentieth century, that is concerned with the problem of woman's rightful place in the social order, with the problems of industry, labour, good government, sanitation, the enfranchisement of the oppressed, and the abolition of war, learn from a man who never expressed Himself on any of these themes? What right has the Christian apologist to claim universal leadership for one into whose vocabulary and scheme of teaching some of the most vital questions of the modern world seem never to have entered?

The question here raised is no unimportant one. It is the very point at which many

people at the present time are deeming it necessary to give up the position of followers of Jesus in favour of some attitude of mind that seems more cosmopolitan and up to date. They are frankly saying to us that the Man of Nazareth can no longer be urged as the world's final interpreter of God and of humanity.

It is perhaps unnecessary, and it may even be impossible, to give a full and adequate answer to this questioning or negative attitude of mind. Yet something may be said.

No student of history can disregard the limitations under which Jesus was compelled to labour in virtue of the age in which He was born. That age was the most wonderful and providential in all the centuries. Nothing could be more marvellous than the centering of national and religious interests within definite and even narrow ranges of life in that Roman empire. All the currents of earlier history were forced to run through the single channel of Roman institutions. For this very reason it was both providentially opportune and tyrannically limited. Jesus had nothing of that freedom of public speech which the prophets of earlier times had possessed. Isaiah and Jeremiah had spoken openly and pointedly regarding the government of their

time and its delinquencies in realizing the ideals of life. The Roman government was vastly better than that of ancient Judah, but it gave no liberty of prophesying. To have denounced the institutions of His day would have brought upon Jesus the instant hand of authoritative suppression from the representatives of Rome. Slavery, industrial oppression, corrupt government and war were a part of the natural order of things. They were so integrally involved in the structure of society as to be accepted as divinely approved. Against such ideas public denunciation would have been futile and ill-timed. Jesus therefore adopted the wiser course of silence on these specific heads. But this did not prevent Him from the inculcation of principles that were destined to right the wrongs of humanity in later days.

But again it must be remembered that the Roman age was in no condition to receive helpful teachings upon matters of such modern significance as those that have been mentioned. The abuses upon which the conscience of society has been trained to sensitiveness by twenty centuries of Christian teaching were beneath the sky-line of recognition in that day. To have lifted a hand against those sacred and time-honoured

abuses would have seemed scandalous and irreverent. Jesus did better than this. He awakened in men's hearts the sense of unrest regarding the fixed institutions of the time, and then left His people to work out the slow and certain processes of remedy through the years.

This is the very heart of Jesus' ministry to the world. He did not attack institutions or even abuses, save as they warred against the immediate values of human life. Conscious of the fixed forms of government and the inexorable nature of the social fabric in His day, He turned His attention to the individual and laid foundations for a new conception of the dignity of human life which must issue presently in a new consciousness of social obligation. It is true that Jesus said nothing about the oppressive treatment of womanhood, of labour, of the slave and of the ruled class in the world of His day. But He laid down principles and taught vital and inspiring truths concerning God and man which in the process of the centuries have emancipated womanhood, compelled the world to face the problem of the rights of man, woman and child in industry, to formulate the principles of good government and of clean city life, to emancipate the slave and to put war

under the ban of increasing public disapproval.

But perhaps there are doubting minds that would be inclined to insist that Jesus did not really organize the foundations of these great reforms which have appeared successively, but that He is only a familiar and revered symbol around which we gather the best ideals of each generation. May it not be that we attribute to Jesus leadership in these good enterprises of the years, much as the English people have attributed to the legendary King Arthur the virtues which they most admire in a ruler and knight? Why may not the same idealizing habit that among the Hebrew people attributed all legislation, whatever its date, to Moses, all wisdom writing to Solomon, and all the psalms to David, incline the Christian Church to-day to make of Jesus the common denominator of whatever social and ethical progress it desires and is attempting to promote?

It may be granted quite freely that each age conceives Jesus in the terms it can best understand. Successively He has been called shepherd, king, warrior, priest, prophet, teacher, reformer and missionary, because these were the terms that meant most to the

people of particular periods in the progress of the Christian society. Such terms become obsolete as new ground is traversed. It is only a belated view of Jesus, for example, that takes pleasure in investing Him to-day with the attributes of warrior, priest or king. We like to give Him more congenial titles, which seem consistent with His ministry, as we are able by increasing intimacy with His spirit to understand Him.

But this fact does not explain the perennial timeliness of Jesus and the centrality of His influence in every new period of growth to higher ideals. For it is just in the circle of that influence of His that these ideals emerge. The movements which have produced the enrichment of life are those which are inspired by the study of His life. It is quite impossible to account for the definiteness of His relationship to these enrichments of the world apart from a genuine inspiration derived from Him. If one wishes to test the reality of this claim, He has only to substitute some other revered and honoured leader of the past for the person of Christ, and see how instantly the whole atmosphere is changed. We associate with the lives of Plato, Isaiah, Zoroaster, Buddha and Mohammed remarkable qualities of leadership

and important contributions to the progress of the peoples they touched. But would there be the slightest inclination on the part of any discerning student of history to assert that the teachings of any of these men, or indeed of all of them combined, had produced a single one of the modern movements for the enfranchisement of humanity and its exaltation to nobler levels of being? To ask the question is to answer it. It is Jesus alone who meets this test of perennial timeliness. He alone is capable of reinterpretation in the terms of each new generation, and with the investiture of its inspiration and highest experience.

It is impossible and perhaps unnecessary to follow out the idea here suggested to its appropriate expression in the various new means with which the life of Jesus has been interpreted in our generation. A word must suffice. We are sensitive to the status of womanhood and are seeking for her a new honour and opportunity. It is inevitable, therefore, that we should study afresh the attitude of Jesus towards womanhood, so different from the habitual practice of His time, and should find a new meaning in His words regarding the hardness of the old law in its oppressive burdens laid upon woman, and

the new significance which He attached to her estate and value. Childhood is to us to-day a new discovery. Most of the interests of modern life touch the experience of childhood at some point, and for this reason no generation has ever read with such interest the story of Jesus' concern for childhood and of His delight in the companionship of the little ones.

The Church for generations read the same commission that we now have in the words to the disciples, "Go ye into all the world." But those words meant nothing to earlier centuries. Even the reformers of the sixteenth century thought the conversion of the world to be a misguided and impious conceit of fanatics. The language of Christ as a revelation of His missionary interest has come to a new birth in our day. For the first time it is understood at something like its true value. And would any one assert that the claim which the Church now boldly makes that Christ's first great command was the evangelization of the world is only the assignment to Him of a sentiment which He never really expressed and an interest which He never actually felt?

It is so with labour, commerce, government, and war. When Jesus said, "I call you not

servants, but friends," He uttered the basic truth which the modern industrial world is only beginning to comprehend; a truth which must be the foundation for that compact of peace between labour and capital which shall put an end to ruinous hostilities and shall usher in the era of coöperation.

And though Jesus was unable to utter a single sentiment upon the question of government without incurring the instant suppressive tyranny of a political system that had spies listening to every word that fell along the streets of its cities, yet the single proverb-like phrase, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's," inspired Paul's marvellous paragraph on the responsibilities of the Christian to government (Romans xiii.), and has become the inspiration of all political reform.

And surely no one need assert that the ideas of Jesus as the great Peace-bringer into a world of strife have not begun to take root in human soil. His message, "Peace I give you," was perhaps not intended to be a governmental programme, but it was the revelation of a spirit that has successively suppressed the horrors of war in many lands, and is to-day casting out the remnants of the

war passion which still lurks, like an evil spirit, in the hearts of men.

If these things be true of the present, what of the future? Christ is capable of perennial reinterpretation as His ideals become more clearly realized. The heart is lifted up and the spirit leaps at the thought of the new disclosures which are yet to be made of His hopes and aspirations for human life. Within the limits of His daily experience He realized every one of these principles, but the generation which knew Him saw only a fragment of the fullness of life which He expressed.

It is only the coming centuries that can realize the marvels of His unfolding life. Every nation and race will make its contributions to the sum total of the character of Jesus by discovering in Him those qualities which it is prepared to discern. And not till the story of human life has come to its final chapter will the fullness of Christ's perfection be known. Then alone can the full significance of His words, "Come unto Me," be comprehended. Then alone can the lessons of His life and the freedom of His companionship be made a common and inspiring experience. And then alone can be understood that perfect manhood which it is the purpose of the Gospel to create in all the world.

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